



## **Middle Primary and Middle Schooling Writing: Pre-Level 1**

**New to writing:** drawing on knowledge of the world in Home Language [HL] (and Standard Australian English [SAE] for some), and on HL and SAE language and literacy (to varying degrees) and is able to comprehend in the HL.

**Are likely to have literacy practices that enable them to negotiate their way in their familiar environment (e.g. planning and sequential skills, spoken competency).**

**Will bring to their learning, levels of maturity and a range of knowledge, understandings, skills and attitudes which will affect (positively and perhaps negatively) their approach to learning.**

**May have well-developed fine motor skills (e.g. be able to carve wood, thread sinkers, use bush survival skills, play electronic games). May not be confident with using writing implements for written symbols. May need time to experiment with pens and other writing implements to make written symbols (i.e. to write words).**

**Are likely to have highly sophisticated hand-eye co-ordination skills (e.g. being able to hit a moving target).**

**Are likely to have competent gross motor skills (e.g. tumbling, somersaults in mid-air).**

- May be reluctant to engage in writing due to either unfamiliarity with the school environment or previously unsuccessful school writing experiences.
- May believe that writing *must* be in Standard English and may feel unable to achieve the required standard, and so may feel inadequate and fearful of writing.\*
- May choose not to write because using SAE equates to inauthenticity (i.e. using 'flash talk', 'styling up', putting on airs).\*
- May choose not to write because of fear of loss of cultural identity (i.e. being a 'kole', 'miglu', etc.) leading to shame.\*<sup>1</sup>
- Will have an understanding that there are people who have literacy skills.

<sup>1</sup> See Malcolm, et al. 1999, p. 19

- May have a conceptualisation of school print literacy and of the purposes of writing dependent upon family background, time spent in school, health of students, mobility of students between schools, lack of educational support for students living at outstations.
- May use HL when communicating ideas.
- Will be confident in communicating in their HL and may have some oral proficiency and comprehension in communicating orally in varieties of English or Torres Strait Creole (e.g. can book airline tickets; order COD CD/T-shirt).
- May have established high levels of support from other family/community members who are print literate/orally competent in SAE (e.g. will get someone else to order things over the phone, do the banking).
- May have had limited school experience.
- May be used to a high degree of independence and may be exercising leadership roles in the home/community; adult relatives may be accepted as advice-givers, but students may be reluctant to fit into Western ‘school child’ role with classroom teachers (e.g. the teacher isn’t my ‘boss’).
- May need time to build relationship with teacher before engaging in writing tasks.
- May display discomfort during writing activities (e.g. sitting lower in chair; making themselves physically smaller).
- May rely on group rather than teacher to guide learning behaviour.
- May have difficulty in concentrating in activities based around writing in SAE.
- May wish to be left alone.

## **COMMENTS**

### **Supportive Environment for Additional Language Development**

#### **➤ Respecting Home Cultures and Languages**

Students at this level, returning to the classroom after an extended period of absence, are likely to be aware of their responsibilities within their community and expect to be able to make independent choices about activities in which they engage.

The demands of the classroom (e.g. teacher expectation, structure, written formats), the school and the teacher may be different from the students’ cultural/family life and world view and this mismatch may create possible issues for classroom management. In order to cater for this, classrooms need to value and respect the HLs and culture/s. This can be achieved in a variety of ways including:

- recognising and valuing the students' home literacies;
- making connections between community and school literacies through school-community partnerships;
- recognising, with sensitivity, local histories to understand local attitudes towards SAE and the HLs; and
- providing bilingual support.

Students at this level need to be given some time to become familiar with and confident in the formal school setting – buildings, routines, classroom environment. Students may be from a home environment where well-known adults give advice and the child makes the choices, which could create a mismatch in a classroom where the teacher may perceive their role as the major player/instructor.

### ➤ **Sporadic Schooling and Age-Appropriate Learning Approaches**

Due to issues such as attendance, mobility, conductive hearing loss and transition, the academic learning of many students is likely to be fragmented. Learning gaps may be apparent, even though school records may indicate that the students have been in the school system for many years. Even though students may be at this level, this should not be confused with their potential ability to learn academically. Teaching/learning approaches need to be relevant to the age level of the student and be culturally inclusive. Older students will benefit from adult literacy learning techniques on their return to school, rather than continually beginning with methodology designed for younger learners (e.g. using early childhood narrative texts as a basis for literacy learning).

Students with sporadic schooling, when at school, need to be given time to observe other students' behaviour, without teacher pressure for engagement in activities. This observation time allows students to establish the 'unwritten' rules for operating in this new environment and become aware of what their 'place' is in the classroom. Respecting these students' initial choices will assist in developing rapport with students and building trusting relationships with them. Students are more likely to engage in activities when they have developed confidence that they can participate without 'shame'. Once students are comfortable in this environment, they will benefit from explicit explanations of these 'unwritten' rules, e.g. following teacher directions; answering questions on their own.

### ➤ **Concept development**

At this early stage of additional language development, it is strongly recommended that concepts are introduced and practised first in HL, before their introduction in SAE. Concepts will be more likely to be learnt if introduced and practised in HL first where possible.

## **Middle Primary and Middle Schooling Writing: Level 1**

**Have a concept of writing:** drawing on knowledge of the world in HL and SAE to varying degrees. May have understanding that there are peers who write for particular purposes.

**May copy some random words from environmental print, and phrases from the classroom context, though understanding is as yet very limited because of lack of knowledge of SAE.**

**May be confident to draw and/or doodle.**

**Are likely to have literacy practices that enable them to negotiate their way in their familiar environment (e.g. planning and sequential skills, spoken competency in HL).**

**Are developing concepts and awareness of print upon which literacy development can be based, and are progressing through a range of steps in early literacy (depending upon prior literacy experiences) and so may stay at this level for some considerable time.**

**Will bring to their learning levels of maturity and a range of knowledge, understandings, skills and attitudes which will affect (positively and perhaps negatively) their approach to learning.**

**Will be restricted in their ability to write in SAE until their literacy set is fully established and until an initial familiarity with SAE language and culture, with the school and classroom context is gained.**

**May continue to need time to experiment with pens and other writing implements to make written symbols (i.e. to write words).**

**Are likely to have highly sophisticated hand-eye co-ordination skills (e.g. being able to hit a moving target).**

**Are likely to have competent gross motor skills.**

- Will know that print has meaning.
- Can trace over dotted letters/words but will not attempt own independent writing.
- May be reluctant to engage in writing due to limited school experience or previously unsuccessful school experiences.
- May believe that writing *must* be in Standard English and may feel unable to achieve the required standard, and so may feel inadequate and fearful of writing.\*

- May feel that SAE equates to inauthenticity (i.e. using ‘flash talk’, ‘styling up’, putting on airs).\*
- May fear that engagement in writing may involve loss of cultural identity (i.e. being a ‘kole’, ‘miglu’, etc.) leading to shame.\*<sup>2</sup>
- May use HL when communicating ideas.
- Will have an understanding that there are people who have literacy skills.
- May have a conceptualisation of school print literacy and of the purposes of writing dependent upon family background, time spent in school, health of students, mobility of students between schools, lack of educational support for students living at outstations.
- Will be confident in communicating in their HL and may have some oral proficiency and comprehension in communicating orally in varieties of English or Torres Strait Creole (e.g. can book airline tickets; order COD CD/T-shirt).
- May have established high levels of support from other family/community members who are print literate/orally competent in SAE (e.g. Will get someone else to order things over the phone, do the banking).

## COMMENTS

### Supportive Environment for Additional Language Development

#### ➤ Respecting Home Cultures and Languages

Students at this level, returning to the classroom after an extended period of absence, are likely to be aware of their responsibilities within their community and expect to be able to make independent choices about activities in which they engage.

The demands of the classroom (e.g. teacher expectation, structure, written formats), the school and the teacher may be different from the students’ cultural/family life and world view and this mismatch may create possible issues for classroom management. In order to cater for this, classrooms need to value and respect the home language/s and culture/s. This can be achieved in a variety of ways including:

- recognising and valuing the students’ home literacies;
- making connections between community and school literacies through school-community partnerships;
- recognising, with sensitivity, local histories to understand local attitudes towards SAE and the HLs; and
- providing bilingual support.

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<sup>2</sup> See Malcolm, et al. 1999, p. 19

Students at this level need to be given some time to become familiar with and confident in the formal school setting – buildings, routines, classroom environment. Students may be from a home environment where well-known adults give advice and the child makes the choices, which could create a mismatch in a classroom where the teacher may perceive their role as the major player/instructor.

➤ **Sporadic Schooling and Age-Appropriate Learning Approaches**

Due to issues such as attendance, mobility, conductive hearing loss and transition, the academic learning of many students is likely to be fragmented. Learning gaps may be apparent, even though school records may indicate that the students have been in the school system for many years. Even though students may be at this level, this should not be confused with their potential ability to learn academically. Teaching/learning approaches need to be relevant to the age level of the student and be culturally inclusive. Older students will benefit from adult literacy learning techniques on their return to school, rather than continually beginning with methodology designed for younger learners (e.g. using early childhood narrative texts as a basis for literacy learning).

Students with sporadic schooling, when at school, need to be given time to observe other students' behaviour, without teacher pressure for engagement in activities. This observation time allows students to establish the 'unwritten' rules for operating in this new environment and become aware of what their 'place' is in the classroom. Respecting these students' initial choices will assist in developing rapport with students and building trusting relationships with them. Students are more likely to engage in activities when they have developed confidence that they can participate without 'shame'. Once students are comfortable in this environment, they will benefit from explicit explanations of these 'unwritten' rules, e.g. following teacher directions; answering questions on their own.

➤ **Concept development**

At this early stage of additional language development, it is strongly recommended that concepts are introduced and practised first in HL, before their introduction in SAE. Concepts will be more likely to be learnt if introduced and practised in HL first where possible.

## Middle Primary and Middle Schooling Writing: Pre-Level 2

**Beginning to reproduce writing in SAE:** drawing on knowledge of the world in HL and SAE to varying degrees.

**Can reproduce environmental print and sentences from teachers' scribing (from blackboard writing/teacher's writing in their workbooks/sentence strips/word banks).**

**Will be able to select words (with picture cues) to fill in the blanks in guided cloze activity with teacher support.**

**Can write captions/labels on pictures/diagrams with maximum scaffolding (e.g. label parts of an engine using a word list).**

**Will require a high degree of intense scaffolding and one-to-one teacher/adult support to engage in and complete tasks designed for their year level.**

**May select and copy printed material when given an unsupported task above their writing ability without one-to-one support but as yet may have little understanding of what they are copying (e.g. copying out pages of an encyclopaedia to show that they are writing).**

**Will bring to their learning, levels of maturity and a range of knowledge, understandings, skills and attitudes which will affect (positively and negatively) their approach to learning.**

- May be reluctant to engage in writing due to limited school experience or previously unsuccessful school experiences.
- May believe that writing *must* be in Standard English and may feel unable to achieve the required standard, and so may feel inadequate and fearful of writing.\*
- May feel that SAE equates to inauthenticity (i.e. using 'flash talk', 'styling up', putting on airs).\*
- May choose not to write because of fear of loss of cultural identity (i.e. being a 'kole', 'miglu', etc) leading to shame. \*<sup>3</sup>
- May use HL when communicating ideas.
- Will be confident in communicating in their HL and may also have some oral proficiency and comprehension in communicating orally in varieties of English or Torres Strait Creole (e.g. can book airline tickets; order COD CD/T-shirt).

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<sup>3</sup> See Malcolm, et al. 1999, p. 19

- May have established high levels of support from other family/community members who are print literate/orally competent in SAE (e.g. will get someone else to order things over the phone, do the banking).

## **COMMENTS**

### **Supportive Environment for Additional Language Development**

#### **➤ Respecting Home Cultures and Languages**

Students at this level, returning to the classroom after an extended period of absence, are likely to be aware of their responsibilities within their community and expect to be able to make independent choices about activities in which they engage.

The demands of the classroom (e.g. teacher expectation, structure, written formats), the school and the teacher may be different from the students' cultural/family life and world view and this mismatch may create possible issues for classroom management. In order to cater for this, classrooms need to value and respect the home language/s and culture/s. This can be achieved in a variety of ways including:

- recognising and valuing the students' home literacies;
- making connections between community and school literacies through school-community partnerships;
- recognising, with sensitivity, local histories to understand local attitudes towards SAE and the HLs; and
- providing bilingual support.

Students at this level need to be given some time to become familiar with and confident in the formal school setting – buildings, routines, classroom environment. Students may be from a home environment where well-known adults give advice and the child makes the choices, which could create a mismatch in a classroom where the teacher may perceive their role as the major player/instructor.

#### **➤ Sporadic Schooling and Age-Appropriate Learning Approaches**

Due to issues such as attendance, mobility, conductive hearing loss and transition, the academic learning of many students is likely to be fragmented. Learning gaps may be apparent, even though school records may indicate that the students have been in the school system for many years. Even though students may be at this level, this should not be confused with their potential ability to learn academically. Teaching/learning approaches need to be relevant to the age level of the student and be culturally inclusive. Older students will benefit from adult literacy learning techniques on their return to school, rather than continually beginning with methodology designed for younger learners (e.g. using early childhood narrative texts as a basis for literacy learning).

Students with sporadic schooling, when at school, need to be given time to observe other students' behaviour, without teacher pressure for engagement in activities. This observation time allows students to establish the 'unwritten' rules for operating in this new environment and become aware of what their 'place' is in the classroom.

Respecting these students' initial choices will assist in developing rapport with students and building trusting relationships with them. Students are more likely to engage in activities when they have developed confidence that they can participate without 'shame'. Once students are comfortable in this environment, they will benefit from explicit explanations of these 'unwritten' rules, e.g. following teacher directions; answering questions on their own.

➤ **Concept development**

At this early stage of additional language development, it is strongly recommended that concepts are introduced and practised first in HL, before their introduction in SAE. Concepts will be more likely to be learnt if introduced and practised in HL first where possible.

## **Middle Primary and Middle Schooling Writing: Level 2**

**Beginning to experiment with writing in SAE:** drawing on knowledge of the world in HL and SAE to varying degrees.

**Can write learned phrases and can complete short cloze activities around familiar language with contextual support.**

**Are able to make attempts at captions/labels on pictures/diagrams with some teacher support.**

**May use beginning graphophonic knowledge in their attempts at writing learned phrases, captions, etc.**

**Can write language which is related to their level of spoken SAE and to the teacher's modelled reading and writing.**

**Can participate orally (at a minimal level) in guided whole class and group constructions of text.**

**May write with influences of HL on writing and attempts should be encouraged.**

**Are able to read back own writing.**

**May be able to provide only limited comments about their pictures or writing in SAE; however, may choose to give comments and explanations in their HL to their HL peers.**

- May be comfortable using preferred genre in own writing (e.g. journal entries), with learned and previously successful phrases, or engaging in set writing tasks which closely follow teacher-modelled texts.
- May have complex thoughts, but are unwilling to risk making experimental approximations in SAE (seen as mistakes which the learner may not value and be ashamed of but are an indication of and necessary for language development).
- May seek out successful sentences from previous work or peers to copy. This strategy enables success and develops confidence and is a scaffold to accessing environmental print.
- Are likely to use HL when communicating ideas.
- May believe that writing *must* be in Standard English. Extension to independent writing beyond known formulaic phrases/sentences may not occur, or take a long time, due to feelings of inadequacy.

- May feel that SAE equates to inauthenticity (i.e. using ‘flash talk’, ‘styling up’, putting on airs).<sup>4</sup>
- May limit engaging in written tasks intended to extend their repertoire because of fear of loss of cultural identity and/or limited school experience/previously unsuccessful school experience.
- May share ideas about topics/tasks in HL with HL peers/teacher prior to engaging in writing activities.

## COMMENTS

### Supportive Environment for Additional Language Development

#### ➤ **Rate of progress**

Teachers need to develop awareness of language varieties and language differences in the community (e.g. SAE, TSC, AE) to prevent overcorrection of ‘errors’ (which may be correct in the students’ HL) which may lead to a negative effect on future writing attempts.

The development of oracy skills (Listening and Speaking) in SAE will also assist in providing an overall SAE proficiency to support writing in SAE and facilitate development to Level 3 (see ‘Making the Jump’ [Hudson and Berry, 1999] for suggestions on oracy development).

It is difficult for students of this age to operate in the classroom at Level 2, particularly if they feel they are judged as a whole by their level of writing. It is important to recognise, acknowledge and respect student abilities, achievement and potential (e.g. having 2 or more languages – many students are not aware of how able they are as language learners). It is also a priority to recognise and respect the HL community, culture and world view of the student which are central to identity at this stage of development. Building a trusting relationship will form a sound basis for accelerating further progress in students’ writing.

#### ➤ **Transparency (similarity between Torres Strait Creole/Kriol/Aboriginal English and SAE)**

Learners need to develop understandings of transparency (similarity between creole/Aboriginal English and SAE) and language differences. This means that differences in vocabulary and grammar between the languages/dialects need to be explicitly taught to assist in writing in SAE. Transparency is best explained through an HL adult and SAE teacher in partnership.

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<sup>4</sup> See Malcolm, et al. 1999, p. 19

➤ **Age-Appropriate Learning Approaches**

Middle schooling students are developing maturity and will expect adults to respect their intellectual capacity. Students will need *real* reasons for writing, and will need to have concrete experiences of how writing in SAE might be relevant to them, and efficiently help them achieve their real-life purposes e.g. faxing an order for materials to an art supply shop; sending formal SAE invitation to principal.

➤ **Concept development**

At this early stage of additional language development, it is strongly recommended that concepts are introduced and practised first in HL, before their introduction in SAE. Concepts will be more likely to be learnt if introduced and practised in HL first where possible.

### **Middle Primary and Middle Schooling Writing: Level 3**

**Beginning self-generated writing in SAE in familiar guided contexts:** drawing on knowledge of the world in HL and SAE, and on SAE language culture and literacy.

**Are generating own short texts on familiar topics (e.g. recounts, email messages, straightforward telephone messages, letters, reports, descriptions), in highly supported contexts with specific modelling of text structure and language features (e.g. word banks).**

**May connect simple sentences/statements approximating sentences with cohesive devices (e.g. and, but, then), very limited in range, typical of the spoken mode.**

**Are writing with marked HL features reflecting the experimentation with SAE evident in their oral language. This use of interlanguage is a sign of second language progress and should be sensitively supported. (See comments below.)**

- Will write with alternative HL grammatical and vocabulary choices in their writing, e.g. in subject-verb agreement, alternative prepositions, tense, word order, plurals, article omissions.
- Can write beyond the immediate environment and beyond previously known language only if patterning and modelling are provided by the teacher.
- May have an initial control of sentence structure though this may sometimes be haphazard (e.g. subordinate clauses may be combined incorrectly, or left to stand alone; punctuation may be inconsistent or even non-existent).
- Are beginning to demonstrate explicit knowledge of differences between HL and SAE (given that this is being explicitly taught).
- May have difficulty understanding instructions for the writing task (e.g. the topic to write about; instructions for paragraphing; instructions like “write in your own words”).
- May make errors in their spelling because of their pronunciation in SAE (which is influenced by their HL) e.g. We ate *are* banana.
- May express complex thought in oral HL. This is to be encouraged and developed.

## COMMENTS

### Supportive Environment for Additional Language Development

#### ➤ **Respecting Home Cultures and Languages**

School writing culture involves tasks such as expressing elaborate opinions which may not be a feature of or an acceptable part of the students' culture. Learners may need to be introduced to this aspect of the school culture and its language (e.g. use of 'if') in a sensitive yet explicit way.

#### ➤ **Respect for Interlanguage**

Constant correction of students' written SAE at this stage may impede future writing attempts and hinder risk-taking which is necessary for further development. Making approximations to the target language is a recognised step in second language development (e.g. "Kathy me lolly shop go" – using Wik structure with English words). It is important to respect this stage and not insist on grammatical accuracy which is described as falling into place at Level 6 (though fluency on concrete topics may be apparent at Level 5). This does not mean that language input should not be given at earlier stages, but that accurate output should not be expected ("Keep putting it in, but don't expect to see it immediately"). In addition, development of an awareness of language differences between HL and SAE through explicit teaching can take place without over-correction of students' writing. Students will be assisted by being encouraged to take risks and communicate meaning rather than to strive for premature accuracy which may lead to plateauing at an early level.

#### ➤ **Transparency (similarity between Torres Strait Creole/Kriol/Aboriginal English and SAE)**

Teachers need to continue to develop their own awareness of language varieties and language differences in the community (e.g. SAE, AE, TSC) so that the speaking needs of their learners can be identified and addressed.

#### ➤ **Concept development**

At this early stage of additional language development, it is strongly recommended that concepts are introduced and practised first in HL, before their introduction in SAE. Concepts will be more likely to be learnt if introduced and practised in HL first where possible.

#### ➤ **Facilitating progress in writing in SAE**

Learners at this level will experience great difficulty in performing academic tasks (e.g. reports and narratives) expected at their age level without extensive ESL support. Even with ESL support, ability to perform academic writing tasks will be limited because of the learners' overall level of proficiency in SAE. Learners at this level will benefit from specialist, intensive, full-time ESL teaching and bilingual assistance. Students will also benefit from drawing on personal experiences, as well as highly contextualised classroom activities.

➤ **Respecting Cultures and Narrative Forms**

It is important to take great care if expecting students to conform to Western generic structure and language features of the recount and narrative. This may impede rather than facilitate progress in writing. (See Level 4 for more details.)

Cultural sensitivity particularly needs to be used when using narratives in the classroom. Malcolm (1999) draws our attention to Hymes (1980, 1996) who has argued for “narrative thinking and storytelling rights” to be recognised in education. Researchers have identified a number of Indigenous storytelling genres, e.g. ‘tracking’, ‘spirit encounter’, and ‘surveying’. These genres may vary from ‘classic’ Western narrative structure and features. Students may continue to require explanation of the variety of ways different cultural groups tell stories. Texts should include a broad selection of both oral and written texts from a variety of cultural backgrounds, including those from their own communities. If students’ HL culture is valued through recognition of HL storytelling, students may be more likely to engage with all texts, and further develop their reading and writing proficiency.

## **Middle Primary and Middle Schooling Writing: Level 4**

**Applying understandings of writing to experimenting with longer and more structured discourse:** drawing on knowledge of the world in HL, and on HL and culture (to varying degrees.)

**Are able to write simple, coherent texts on familiar topics (e.g. narratives, reports, recounts, procedures) modelled on those read with and/or by the teacher (but with HL features as described below).**

**Will see themselves as writers and will have success.**

**May be able to express complex thoughts (e.g. explanations, giving reasons) but in doing so, the text may become less coherent and less accurate (a sign of language growth) and require more on the part of the reader to comprehend intended meaning. This risk-taking is to be encouraged as it enables progress.**

**Will need strong ESL support (e.g. pre-task and post-task talk, modelling, joint construction of texts, conferencing by teacher, provision of vocabulary) and need more time than their SAE-speaking peers to complete written tasks.**

**Will have had enough positive experiences with writing to take bigger risks when writing themselves. Will use their knowledge of text gained through reading a variety of texts when structuring their writing or phrasing an idea. (Will often apply chunks of language internalised through repeated readings in their writing).**

**Will understand that there will be an audience and will therefore make explicit choices about language used in written texts. (i.e. fine tuning their text using more appropriate language for the purpose e.g. using textual and stylistic features to emphasise meaning, e.g. dialogue in narrative; BIG, L O N G , small).**

**May use patterns of HL storytelling (narrative) in their writing, e.g. introducing new, ‘unexpected’ characters/events, repeating and rephrasing a statement or constant use of conjunctions (e.g. use of “and”) within a passage which may cause SAE reader to reread/predict/ask for clarification. (See Note)**

**Will have difficulty making more than initial attempts at editing on their own, after prior teacher feedback on their drafts, even with taught straight-forward language features and structures.**

- **May have greater speed and fluency in writing because of their growing knowledge of SAE language and culture; with teacher support, are prepared to take more risks because of this, i.e. will continue to keep ideas going and complete the text knowing that their first draft will contain errors.**

- May use growing range of language structures, e.g. greater use of connectives and verb forms, conditionals (He said that if we...), cause and effect (If you've got a dinghy, then...).
- Will have uneven control of sentence structure, particularly when they attempt to write complex thoughts.
- May write texts which sometimes lose comprehensibility due to HL features, (e.g. tense [time orientation] difficulties).
- Will sequence thoughts before writing.
- May demonstrate pride in writing by ensuring neatness (e.g. over-editing, tearing pages out of book and starting again).
- Will write with the characteristics of their spoken language (e.g. spelling reflecting pronunciation).

### **Additional Notes for Upper Primary/Junior Secondary Students**

- Will write longer, descriptive texts, simple film review and information texts (e.g. reports) if provided with extensive ESL-informed support (e.g. explicit teaching of topic, text structure and selected language features, text deconstruction, joint construction of text, etc.). Paragraph and sentence structure may be uneven, and application of syntax rules and cohesive devices elementary. May conform closely to teacher's modelling and will have, as yet, little independence.

## **COMMENTS**

### **Supportive Environment for Additional Language Development**

#### **➤ Respect for Interlanguage**

Constant correction of students' written SAE at this stage may impede future writing attempts and hinder risktaking which is necessary for further development. Making approximations to the target language is a recognised step in second language development (e.g. "Kathy me lolly shop go" – using Wik structure with English words). It is important to respect this stage and not insist on grammatical accuracy which is described as falling into place at Level 6 (though fluency on concrete topics may be apparent at Level 5). This does not mean that language input should not be given at earlier stages, but that accurate output should not be expected ("Keep putting it in, but don't expect to see it immediately"). In addition, development of an awareness of language differences between HL and SAE through explicit teaching can take place without over-correction of students' writing.

Students will be assisted by being encouraged to take risks and communicate meaning rather than to strive for premature accuracy which may lead to plateauing at an early level.

➤ **Transparency (similarity between Torres Strait Creole/Kriol/Aboriginal English and SAE)**

Teachers need to continue to develop awareness of language varieties and language differences in the community (e.g. SAE, AE, TSC) so that the speaking needs of their learners can be identified and addressed.

➤ **Concept development**

Students at this level are in the early stages of learning to learn new concepts in SAE. Concepts will more likely be learnt successfully if introduced and *practised* in HL first where possible (e.g. discussion of topics, task requirements, etc.).

➤ **Respecting Cultures and Narrative Forms**

Students may use patterns (structures and language features) of HL storytelling genres in their writing, e.g. spirit encounter, tracking, surveying, i.e. stories may not have an orientation, complication and resolution as seen in many Western structures.

Culturally appropriate intonation and emphasis of the spoken HL form may not match the written form expected of Western culture influencing teachers' interpretation of the written text (e.g. '*Long long long long time*'). The teacher may misinterpret the student's purpose in using these features, e.g. the child may write a narrative and use multiple repetitions for stylistic effect which the teacher may mistake as repetition to make the text appear longer. An understanding of the students' HL can assist the teacher to point out the differences between the HL and SAE (Malcolm, et al., 1999, p. 54).

Demand for Western narrative generic form and features at this stage may inhibit the students' engagement with text and pleasure in writing, which may affect self-confidence and hinder future writing development. Ian Malcolm, et al. (1999, p. 75) draws our attention to Hymes (1980, 1996) who has argued for "narrative thinking and storytelling rights" to be recognised in education. Recognising cultural diversity in storytelling involves valuing and affirming the learners' perception of themselves and their personal story.

➤ **Facilitating progress in writing in SAE**

Learners at this level will continue to experience great difficulty in performing academic tasks expected at their age level without extensive ESL support. Even with ESL support, ability to perform academic writing tasks will be limited because of the learners' overall level of proficiency in SAE. Learners at this level will benefit from specialist, intensive, full-time ESL teaching and bilingual assistance.

It is very difficult for second language learners to express complex/abstract thoughts in writing at this level, and yet this is a school expectation of this age group. It is therefore important that learners take part in language/concept-rich tasks to ensure that they develop academic concepts in HL and SAE.

School writing culture involves tasks such as expressing elaborate opinions which may not be a feature of or an acceptable part of the students' culture. Learners may need to be introduced to this aspect of the school culture and its language (e.g. use of 'if') in a sensitive yet explicit way.

## **Middle Primary and Middle Schooling Writing: Level 5**

**Growing independence in writing but complexity and precision is limited:** drawing on knowledge of the world in HL and SAE, and on HL and SAE language and literacy (to varying degrees).

**Are showing signs of becoming more independent in their writing and are gaining greater control over the language and texts.**

**Are able to write independently (though with support normally given in classes) recounts, narratives, story retellings and other texts, as expected at their phase of schooling, but with ESL features as below.**

**Are able to write short informational texts, e.g. reports, projects, etc. (though with HL features) with clear guidance, and if reading source material is at their level of reading ability. If reading source material is too advanced, writing may break down. However, will not write with depth because of limited control over SAE (e.g. narrow range of vocabulary, structures, subtleties of the language.)**

**May be able to express complex thoughts (e.g. explanations, giving reasons) but in doing so, the text may continue to become less coherent and less accurate (a sign of language growth) and require more on the part of the reader to comprehend intended meaning. This risk-taking is to be encouraged as it enables progress.**

**May self-edit routine grammatical corrections (e.g. simple past tense corrections) after teacher feedback on their drafts, but may not yet have enough language awareness about written SAE to adequately self-edit their written texts (e.g. complex clauses, cohesion).**

- Will have a growing control over the writing process (e.g. reading and re-reading, editing), which reflects a growing control over the language within the writing; however, will still need task to be clarified.
- May copy sections of relevant readings and merge with own writing to produce comprehensible text, though with HL features.
- Will have a growing proficiency in SAE which will allow learners to be able to talk about their own writing and that of others more effectively (e.g. in conferencing).
- Will be beginning to reflect some features of written language and less features of spoken language in their writing (at the level expected for the phase of schooling).
- Are beginning to spontaneously draw on themes and ideas from reading in SAE, because proficiency in SAE and in reading skills is developing and their range of reading in SAE is growing.

- Will continue to draw on knowledge and ideas in HL and HL culture.
- Will capitalise on what they know, and will avoid language and topics with which they have difficulty.
- Are writing using more complex clauses with more subordination (e.g. *Through the winter their larvae will stay in a safe place waiting for warm weather to come.*) and internal references (e.g. *After the rain gauge filled with water, it was measured and then emptied.*).
- Are using a growing range of cohesive devices (e.g. because, so, however, the planets...they, etc.)
- Are continuing to experiment with a variety of structures; this experimenting is a sign of language growth, so that errors (e.g. errors in vocabulary choice, tense, plurals, verb endings, e.g. he go) will continue to appear but may be less frequent and will be less likely to impede meaning.
- Are able to write more fluently as they experiment with written language, and gain more control over writing strategies and over SAE.
- May continue to use HL features/structures in narrative writing (see comment, Level 4).

### **Additional Notes for Upper Primary/Junior Secondary Students**

- Are able to write fluently with some precision and with some detail at a non-abstract, non-complex level on concrete topics, but may need more time than SAE-speaking students (e.g. writing a report about a school excursion in the school newsletter, description).
- May express complex and/or abstract thoughts, but in doing so, the text may continue to become less coherent (e.g. time/tense orientation) and less accurate (e.g. difficulties with word order, plurals, articles, prepositions, tense usage, ability to write in appropriate voice [passive/active]) e.g. scientific explanation. This is to be seen as a sign of progress.
- Will be unable to communicate in writing in SAE the ‘depth’ of ideas/thoughts available to them, e.g. film review may stay at concrete, descriptive level rather than containing analysis and evaluation expected at their age level.
- Will continue to need extensive ESL-informed support on complex academic tasks expected at their age level.

## COMMENTS

### Supportive Environment for Additional Language Development

#### ➤ **Concept development**

Students at this level are in the early stages of learning to learn new concepts in SAE. Concepts will more likely be learnt successfully if introduced and *practised* in HL first where possible (e.g. discussion of topics, task requirements, etc.).

#### ➤ **Facilitating progress in writing in SAE**

Level 5 Writing, particularly in academic contexts, presents difficulties for many ESL learners. It becomes a ‘plateau’ level for a number of ESL learners especially those without a solid grounding of content knowledge or with interruptions in their HL (e.g. due to conductive hearing loss as a result of otitis media). Many learners find it hard to move beyond Level 5; yet further progress is essential for more sophisticated language use expected in academic school tasks at their age level.

## **Middle Primary and Middle Schooling Writing: Level 6**

**Becoming competent writers in SAE:** drawing on knowledge of the world in HL and SAE, and on HL and SAE language and literacy (to varying degrees).

**Are competent writers (at the level expected for their phase of schooling), though some HL features persist which will not impede meaning.**

**Will still need more time than SAE-speaking students at the same phase of schooling to process ideas and language prior to and during writing.**

**Are able to write extended pieces of writing, given time.**

- Will be able to demonstrate increased fluency and speed which in turn will influence the length of text learners are able to produce.
- Can take notes and write a researched report (at the level expected at their phase of schooling) provided the task is carefully structured (e.g. specific questions to be researched; talking around the topic; drafting and redrafting); however, are likely to need more time for both the reading and writing required in order to produce their best work.
- Will still have some difficulty writing reflectively (at the level expected at their phase of schooling) about cultural attitudes, assumptions and beliefs encountered in written and spoken texts (e.g. in a writing journal), because of complexity of language needed and because of unfamiliarity with culture-specific aspects of some texts; however, can write in this way with additional ESL-informed support and with additional time.
- Will continue to benefit from being able to draw on their HL and HL cultural and world knowledge through HL for their writing in SAE.
- Are able to paragraph effectively within texts using simple and complex sentences and appropriate connectors (at the level expected at their phase of schooling) reflecting ability to organise a series of main ideas and details within narratives, reports and other texts.
- Will have a growing command of the grammatical system of SAE, including complex verbal meanings (relationships of time, expressing tentativeness and subtle intention with might or could).
- Are using more complex sentence structures; however, some HL features may still persist, e.g. omitted articles; inappropriate prepositions). May continue to have some difficulty writing complex ideas in SAE because of weaknesses in cohesion, complex sentence structures, etc.
- Will be unable to use a variety of culturally loaded language (e.g. idioms, metaphors, and subtle humour at the level of their SAE-speaking peers).

### **Additional Notes for Upper Primary/Junior Secondary Students**

- Will rely on supportive, ESL-informed context (e.g. focusing on background knowledge, text structures and linguistic features; opportunities for redrafting; time) to produce final versions of their texts.
- Are experiencing difficulties in Subject English (at the level expected at their phase of schooling) with written tasks which depend on expressing fine socio-cultural distinctions (e.g. about characters), substantiating arguments to do with highly cultural content and requiring fine language choices (e.g. arguing whether film is better than the book); with writing from the position/point of view as set in the assignment.

### **COMMENTS**

#### **Supportive Environment for Additional Language Development**

##### **➤ Need for Extra Time**

Learners may produce writing which does not reflect their potential at this ESL level, because preparatory reading has taken most of the preparation time, and decreased the time available for drafting and writing.

## **Middle Primary and Middle Schooling Writing: Level 7**

**Competent writers in SAE (within the range expected for their phase of schooling):** drawing on knowledge of the world in HL and SAE, and on HL and SAE language and literacy (to varying degrees).

**Are competent writers at the level expected for their phase of schooling.**

**Can write for a variety of purposes and audiences, across a range of social and academic contexts within the range of ability expected at their phase of schooling.**

**Can write without the need for extra time.**

**Are able to draw on a well-developed overall proficiency in SAE.**

**May experience occasional difficulties in writing activities on culture-specific topics outside their familiar context.**

- Will have sensitivity to the appropriate language requirements of different writing tasks (at the level expected of their age and phase of schooling).
- Will have a well-developed control of grammar and vocabulary within the range of language expected at the middle-upper phases of schooling; will make spelling, pronoun reference errors, etc. which are commonly seen in the writing of their SAE-speaking peers.
- May occasionally exhibit HL features (e.g. tense difficulties, confusion with ‘sub-technical’ vocabulary (e.g. materials, attraction, consume) but are relatively rare.
- Are able to consider and select from a well-developed language resource to convey more precision in meaning (within the range of ability expected at their phase of schooling) in more complex and abstract activities across the curriculum (e.g. hypothesis formation and verification in a report of science experiment; in an evaluation of the attitudes, beliefs and assumptions in a text).

### **Additional Background Information**

- Will continue to benefit from using their HL with HL peers and adults (e.g. at home, in the community) and from being able to draw on their knowledge of the world.

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