



Bandscales for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Learners

Junior Primary Oral Bandscales:

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Pre-level 1:

New to Standard Australian English: Drawing on knowledge of the world in Home Language.

Will use HL and non-verbal HL gestures in all communication attempts with SAE speakers.

Will interact in HL in classroom activities and spontaneous interactions.

Will respond orally to questions and directions in HL.

Will need an attentive interlocutor who is prepared to predict meaning from gestures and context.

Will expect interlocutor to understand HL conversations and respond.

- May demonstrate frustration at not being able to be understood by interlocutor.
- May use avoidance strategies which may exhibit as behaviour problems.
- May be able to sing popular, modern songs, eg Country and Western ballads, rap songs and/or traditional language songs/chants.

In focused SAE speaking lessons, children:

- May participate through actions rather than words, in daily habituation activities, eg. weather chart.
- May participate in finger plays, songs and rhymes using gestures and body movements.
- Will use gestures or HL instead of taught SAE in role play situations, eg. Dramatic play (class shop, hospital, home corner).
- May answer questions by pointing and/or using non-verbal gestures.
- May use gestures, HL and/or physical contact, or not interact at all in group work activities.
- May mimic oral language and actions of peers when unsure of the situation.

Additional Background Information

- May be confident speakers in one or more Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander languages/creoles/dialects.
- May have highly developed non-verbal interactional skills in their HL/s.
- May have highly developed understanding of conventions of social interaction appropriate to their community and home culture.
- May be exposed to a wide range of oral language varieties, eg. Dialects of traditional languages, creoles, dialects, varieties of English, eg. Aboriginal English, SAE, American English.
- Use of HL should be encouraged since self-confidence and a high level of oral competence in HL will assist in SAE development.
- May have delays in HL and auditory skills due to conductive hearing loss as a result of otitis media.
- HL may appear as a one word utterance that sounds like SAE, e.g. drink, toilet.
- Children with otitis media may remain at this level for a longer period of time.
- A child at this level will not be able to comprehend and verbalise adequately in SAE what they know, during formal literacy and numeracy assessment. Therefore in order to assist assessment, a speaker who is competent in both the HL and SAE should be present to assist the teacher to accurately assess the child's capabilities.

Level 1:

New to Standard Australian English: Drawing on knowledge of the world in HL (and in SAE for some), and on HL and SAE language and literacy (to varying degrees).

Will label some objects and use occasional isolated words.

Will use vocabulary limited to express immediate needs.

Will often echo words and phrases of other learners and adults.

Will use gestures to indicate meaning, particular needs, likes and dislikes: needs an attentive interlocutor who is prepared to predict meaning from gestures and context.

Will interact in HL in classroom activities and spontaneous interactions.

- May spend some time without speaking SAE (ie. Silent period); this will depend on the language learning strategies of the learner and may depend to some extent on the learning environment.
- May respond to indirect questions rather than to direct questions.
- May use HL in attempts to communicate with SAE-speaking peers/adults and this is to be encouraged.
- Will use HL conventions (eg. Raising the eyebrows for 'yes', bowing head in shame and not responding to save face, non-eye contact as a sign of respect, shared responses rather than single person turn-taking; silence and waiting before giving response) which may be misinterpreted by Standard Australian English speakers.
- May give inappropriate single word responses due to the understanding that questions from a teacher demand a response.

In focused SAE speaking lessons, children:

- Will participate in daily habituation activities.
- Will participate in finger plays, songs and rhymes.
- Use isolated single words and gestures when asked to talk about drawings or role-play writing.
- May continue to use avoidance strategies.
- May mimic oral language and actions of peers when unsure of the situation.
- May answer questions by pointing to objects.

Additional Background Information

- May be confident speakers in one or more Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander languages/Creoles/dialects.
- May have highly developed non-verbal interactional skills in their HL/s.
- May have highly developed understanding of conventions of social interaction appropriate to their community and home culture.
- May be exposed to a wide range of oral language varieties, eg. Dialects of traditional languages, Creoles, dialects, varieties of English, eg. Aboriginal English, SAE, American English.
- Use of HL should be encouraged since self-confidence and a high level of oral competence in HL will assist in SAE development.
- May have delays in HL and auditory skills due to conductive hearing loss as a result of otitis media.
- Children with Otitis Media may remain at this level for a longer period of time.
- A child at this level will not be able to comprehend and verbalise adequately in SAE what they know, during formal literacy and numeracy assessment. Therefore in order to assist assessment, a speaker who is competent in both the HL and SAE should be present to assist the teacher to accurately assess the child's capabilities.

Pre-level 2:

Beginning to comprehend and use social SAE: drawing on knowledge of the world in HL and SAE.

Is beginning to use some routine and formulaic social language, including familiar courtesies (hello, goodbye, yes sir).

Is developing a larger vocabulary of single word utterances.

May use short series of single words/ 2-3 word formulae mostly without connectives, with meaning provided by context and sympathetic SAE speaker to convey basic needs, feelings and experiences.

Will link spoken words and phrases with pictures.

Will interact in HL in classroom activities and spontaneous interactions.

May choose to use HL looks/gestures rather than words to express routine social interactions (eg. For 'yes'; 'please'; 'thank you'; 'come here')

- Is aware of the existence of languages in the community and the wider world.
- Is beginning to develop confidence to take risks using their beginning SAE within the school community and will benefit with encouragement.
- May continue to respond to indirect questions rather than to direct questions.
- May pronounce SAE with HL influence.
- May continue to use HL to attempt to communicate with SAE-speaking peers/adults and this is to be encouraged.
- May respond to questions using one or two word utterances, eg. Own name, Yes, No.
- Will continue to use HL conventions .(eg. Raising the eyebrows for 'yes', bowing head in shame and not responding to save face, non-eye contact as a sign of respect, shared responses rather than single person turn-taking; silence and waiting before giving response) which may be misinterpreted by Standard Australian English speakers
- May continue to give inappropriate single word responses due to the understanding that questions from a teacher demand a response.

In focused SAE speaking lessons, children:

- Will participate in finger plays, songs, jazz chants and rhymes.
- Will use 2-3 word formulaic phrases in dramatic play.
- Will use gestures and short learned words/formulae (if prompted), when asked to talk about drawings and own writing – eg. Phrases learnt from shared reading and role-play, although they are able to discuss work in detail using HL.
- Will use explicitly taught formulaic phrases to play previously taught games within the current unit of work, eg. Dice games, maths games and bingo., eg. Your turn, my turn, you're next, I'm the winner.
- Will use HL pronunciations while role-playing, eg. 2 sips (2 packets of chips), happle please (apple please).
- May participate in habituation activities with some confidence.
- May repeat learned utterances in games/group work.
- Use single words/ a few 2-3 word formulaic phrases in games with current units of work.

Additional Background Information

- May be confident speakers in one or more Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander languages/Creoles/dialects.
- May have highly developed non-verbal interactional skills in their HL/s.

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- May have highly developed understanding of conventions of social interaction appropriate to their community and home culture.
- May be exposed to a wide range of oral language varieties, eg. Dialects of traditional languages, Creoles, dialects, variety of Englishes, eg. Aboriginal English, SAE, American English.
- Use of HL should be encouraged since self-confidence and a high level of oral competence in HL will assist in SAE development.
- May have delays in HL and auditory skills due to conductive hearing loss as a result of otitis media.
- Children may stay at this level in SAE for a long period of time because of the limited exposure, expectations and use of SAE, and/or because of Otitis Media.
- A child at this level will not be able to comprehend and verbalise adequately in SAE what they know, during formal literacy and numeracy assessment. Therefore in order to assist assessment, a speaker who is competent in both the HL and SAE should be present to assist the teacher to accurately assess the child's capabilities.

Level 2:

Beginning to comprehend and use social SAE and to experiment with SAE in immediate, familiar environments: drawing on knowledge of the world in HL and SAE, and on HL and SAE language and literacy (to varying degrees).

Will use routine and formulaic social language including familiar courtesies, eg. Can I get a drink, please?

Are beginning to combine words creatively into a small number of 2-3 word statements linked by sequence to convey thoughts and feelings, and relying on sympathetic interlocutor, eg. 'im 'it me (Him hit me), rainbow 'ouse (rainbow house).

Will have some control over aspects of the environment as language develops, eg. directing others ('Sit on the mat' - as part of morning routine).

Are able to join in with repetitive language of stories, poems and songs.

May repeat questions or statements of others.

Will use HL in classroom activities and spontaneous interactions.

Is developing confidence to take risks using their beginning SAE within the school community and will benefit with encouragement.

- Have a growing vocabulary for naming and describing objects and events, eg. big plane, green block.
- Are beginning to use SAE intonation patterns in formulaic phrases to assist in conveying meaning.
- Demonstrates a beginning awareness of the differences between HL and SAE.
- Will continue to rely heavily on an attentive interlocutor who is prepared to predict meaning from gestures and context. Both the learner and the interlocutor will refer to objects and pictures to help communication.
- May role-play or joke with known formulaic SAE, e.g. pretending to speak like the teacher.
- Will draw on HL and previous cultural and linguistic experiences including knowledge of the world, to understand and predict meaning of SAE.
- May express world view by using silence as a necessary part of the conversation.
- HL is likely to influence the acquisition of SAE structures. This transference may be evident in word endings and may involve omission, addition or substitution of sounds/words, e.g. Small pussy name Walter (I have a small pussy named Walter), cat (for cats), Can I please ab han happple? (Can I please have an apple?).
- May show a desire to communicate but will require time to process information and formulate response.

In focused SAE speaking lessons, children:

- Will participate in habituation activities with some confidence.
- May repeat learned utterances in games/group work.
- Will use learned formulaic phrases in games with current units of work, (eg. Have you got a...).
- Will participate in finger plays, songs and rhymes with some confidence.
- Will use learned formulaic phrases in dramatic play, eg. shops, hospital, home corner, etc.
- Will continue to use gestures and learned phrases (if prompted), when asked to talk about classroom activities, drawings and own writing - eg. phrases learned from shared reading and role play, although they are able to discuss work in detail using HL.

Additional Background Information

- May be confident speaker in one or more HLs.
- Will continue to use HL to meet immediate needs and to participate in class group activities.
- May have highly developed non-verbal interactional skills in their HL/s.
- May have highly developed understanding of conventions of social interaction appropriate to their community.
- May have delays in HL and auditory skills due to conductive hearing loss as a result of otitis media.
- Children at this level will not be able to efficiently learn new concepts if taught only in SAE, i.e. Children at this level cannot learn to learn in SAE alone. Concepts will more likely be learnt if introduced and practised in HL first where possible.
- Avoid constant correction of students' SAE as this may impede language development.
- Be aware that, due to successful communication, the interlocutor may mistakenly overrate the child. When assessing the child, it is important to listen to *how* the child speaks as well as the message they are communicating.
- A child at this level may not be able to comprehend and verbalise adequately in SAE what they know, during formal literacy and numeracy assessment. Therefore in order to assist assessment, a speaker who is competent in both the HL and SAE should be present to assist the teacher to accurately assess the child's capabilities.

Level 3:

Developing a range of classroom language and moving into learning through SAE: Drawing on knowledge of the world in HL and SAE, and on HL and SAE language and literacy (to varying degrees).

Can participate in routine exchanges (e.g. greetings, simple routine classroom responses) without great difficulty.

Can participate in and initiate face-to-face interaction on familiar classroom topics with familiar peers and adults in a classroom situation, but will rely heavily on interlocutor and contextual support (e.g. interlocutor allowing time for the learners to process thoughts and express themselves in SAE, giving supportive gestures and facial gestures, rephrasing questions, using objects/pictures, retelling a story).

Will continue to use HL for social interaction. May prefer to give responses in SAE after a long wait time. This pause will be longer than a SAE speaker would take.

Have developed confidence to take more risks with language.

Can give short responses to teacher's guiding questions about classroom activities (eg. What have you got there?).

- Will be able to generate own language beyond formulae and two/three word utterances.
- Will speak with frequent breakdowns in fluency and meaning due to limited SAE resource.
- May speak softly in SAE and appear to be shy ("shame").
- May continue to express their world view by using silence as a necessary part of the conversation.
- May appear frustrated by the gap between what they want to say and what they can say in SAE.
- May 'code mix' (mixing SAE and HL) to convey more complex ideas (as a coping strategy) or approximate. Approximation may be difficult to identify without bilingual assistance.
- Will have difficulty in participating in discussions between teacher and learners at the same speed as a person who has SAE as their first language.
- Will take more risks with language when attempting to carry on a conversation, in that speech may be fragmented or stilted, as children search for language from their developing SAE resource to express themselves.
- Will continue to use approximations to recognisable structures as they test hypotheses.
- Are able to express feelings and opinions in short, simple phrases, e.g. I'm frightened.
- Will use HL with HL-speaking peers and adults, e.g. to communicate ideas and concepts and to clarify issues of content or procedure.

In focused SAE speaking lessons, children:

- Will participate in habituation activities with confidence.
- Will participate in finger plays, songs and rhymes with confidence.
- Will begin to experiment with language encountered in contextualized activities, as well as using learned formulaic phrases, e.g. in dramatic play and games.
- Are able to identify and label which language is being spoken eg. 'You talking English'.
- May give inappropriate answers to "wh" questions (who, what, when, where, why).
- Are able to offer more detail when discussing classroom activities, their writing and drawing. Children may demonstrate less reliance on HL.
- May choose to use learned SAE phrases in group work.
- Can successfully participate in simple barrier games using known vocabulary.

Additional Background Information

- May have delays in HL and auditory skills due to conductive hearing loss as a result of otitis media.
- Avoid constant corrections of students' incorrect grammar as this may hinder risk-taking and lead to premature plateauing. Accuracy in grammar is not a feature until Level 6.
- As a child tries to find the right words, teachers may find words are used inappropriately or incorrectly. These attempts are real signs of risk taking that indicate development. eg. Me and Metarima play *with* my house.
- Children at this level will not be able to efficiently learn new concepts if taught only in SAE. When using games to teach and practice SAE ensure that the content is not new or that bilingual assistance is given.
- Children at this level cannot learn to learn in SAE. Concepts will more likely be learnt if introduced and practised in HL first where possible.
- A child at this level may not be able to comprehend and verbalise adequately in SAE what they know, during formal literacy and numeracy assessment. Therefore in order to assist assessment, a speaker who is competent in both the HL and SAE should be present to assist the teacher to accurately assess the child's capabilities.

Level 4:

Extending the range of language beyond own immediate social environment and experimenting with learning through SAE: Drawing on knowledge of the world in HL and SAE, and on HL and SAE language and literacy (to varying degrees).

Are able to communicate in a growing range of social and learning situations with interlocutor and contextual support.

Will require time to process thoughts and express themselves in SAE and may wish to be given opportunities to express themselves without interruption or correction from peers or interlocutor.

Can sustain a conversation with an attentive adult on a familiar topic (eg. describing classroom activities, retelling stories, describing past and present events) but may not provide explicit detail when describing personal events. Has the confidence to give a short morning talk.

Can answer the "5 Ws plus H" questions (who, what, why, where, when and how) about contextualised classroom activities.

Will have fragmented language when attempting longer discourses.

Will make approximations to standard forms - will make frequent errors in syntax and expression as they test their hypotheses, though this will not impede general comprehension by the interlocutor.

- May express world view by using silence as a necessary part of the conversation.
- Will use a small range of connectors eg. and, but, because.
- Is developing awareness and use of tense. Making attempts to use SAE tense markers (eg. 'ed', 'ing') rather than HL tense markers (bin). Eg. I bin played (I played on the swing)
- Is developing use of prepositions - inaccuracies occur because of generalisations in the use of known prepositions. Teachers need to be aware that prepositions may be used differently in HL, and should check whether the child's 'mistakes' are actually grammatically correct in their HL, eg. Ai prait from the dog (I'm frightened of the dog.)
- Vocabulary and concepts are widening, with curriculum-related vocabulary and concepts growing. Because of this, have a growing ability to express ideas in cross-curriculum areas.
- Pronunciation may develop features of SAE. This will vary depending on age, HL and exposure to SAE. SAE pronunciation may develop more quickly in urban situations than in isolated communities because of the additional exposure to SAE.

In focused English speaking lessons, children:

- Are beginning to speak SAE with more confidence in a variety of situations.
- Are able to identify and label which language is being spoken eg. You're talking English.
- Can answer "5 Ws and H" questions.
- Are able to give abstract details when discussing their writing and drawing or a classroom activity.
- Children may demonstrate less reliance on HL.
- May participate in complex discussions.
- May be more creative in their use of SAE in group work.
- Able to attempt more difficult barrier games successfully.
- Will make attempts at grammar but may be inaccurate, e.g. use of prepositions and tense.

Additional Background Information

- May have delays in HL and auditory skills due to conductive hearing loss as a result of otitis media.
- Children at this level will not be able to efficiently learn new concepts if taught only in SAE. When using games to teach and practise SAE ensure that the content is not new or that bilingual assistance is given.
- Children at this level will have difficulty in learning to learn in SAE. Concepts will more likely be learnt if introduced and practised in HL first where possible.
- A child at this level may not be able to comprehend and verbalise adequately in SAE what they know, during formal literacy and numeracy assessment. Therefore in order to assist assessment, a speaker who is competent in both the HL and SAE should be present to assist the teacher to accurately assess the child's capabilities.
- Avoid constant corrections of students' incorrect grammar as this may hinder risk-taking and lead to premature plateauing. Accuracy in grammar is not a feature until Level 6.

Level 5:

Consolidating language use in an expanding range of social contexts but limited in ability to express more complex ideas in learning activities: drawing on knowledge of the world in HL, and on HL and SAE language and literacy (to varying degrees).

Are able to sustain participation in interactions and express ideas during class discussions.

Can contribute own ideas and opinions in SAE.

Can participate in regular classroom activities on familiar topics, but do not have the 'depth' of language needed to relate more complex ideas needed in learning through SAE.

- Will have difficulty in joining in if teacher and/or peers are speaking at the speed of a person who has English as their first language, and if the topics are unfamiliar.
- Are able to ask for help, eg. clarification from teacher and/or peers.
- May choose to explore more complex ideas in HL with HL speaking peers.
- Can speak with greater fluency, ie. fewer hesitations and self-corrections.
- Can use connectives such as and, but, because, then, so with confidence.
- Is developing a growing vocabulary, although it is still limited in range: this contributes to difficulties expressing abstract ideas.
- Developing control of intonation and stress patterns.

Additional Background Information

- May have delays in HL and auditory skills due to conductive hearing loss as a result of otitis media.

Level 6:

Becoming competent users of SAE in most social contexts. Use of SAE in learning contexts is sound, but gaps need filling: drawing on knowledge of the world in HL and SAE, and on HL and SAE language and literacy (To varying degrees).

Are able to take an active and productive part in all classroom learning activities for their age and phase of schooling.

Can participate in an interaction expressing own ideas and opinions with little help from teachers or peers.

Will have some difficulties in expressing precision of meaning still persist.

Are able to express more complex ideas (at their level of cognitive development) on both familiar and new curriculum topics as long as the content is well grounded. Similarly, are able to explain things to other learners.

- Are developing more complex structures, though will continue to have occasional difficulties.
- Have a growing command of complex verbal meanings e.g. relationships of time, subtle intention with might or could.
- Have developed a bank of appropriate specialised vocabulary related to curriculum topics they have experienced. Occasionally gaps in vocabulary will be evident: will attempt approximations using known language to cover gaps (e.g. the thing you put the water in).
- Are likely to bring HL cultural understandings to their learning which may vary from those of their SAE speaking peers and teachers.
- Will not always share the same cultural understandings and experiences as SAE speaking peers and teachers. This may sometimes cause communication breakdown, even at this level of ability in SAE, if the learning environment is monoculturally oriented.

Level 7:

Competent users of SAE in all social and Learning contexts related to 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 able to communicate fluently and accurately for the range of purposes and in the range of social and learning contexts expected at their age level and phase of schooling.

- Are able to explain with facility when they do not know the correct terms in SAE.
- Will continue to benefit from using their HL with HL peers and adults (at home, and in local community) and from being able to draw on their HL knowledge of the world.