

## Results of Primary 6 English Language in TSA 2008

The territory-wide percentage of P.6 students achieving English Language Basic Competency in TSA 2008 was 71.5%. There was a slight increase in the percentage achieving basic competency in 2008 relative to performance level in 2007 which was 71.3.

### Primary 6 Assessment Design

The assessment tasks for P.6 English Language were based on the *Basic Competency (BC) Descriptors (Tryout Version) for English Language at the end of Key Stage 2 (Primary 6)* and the *CDC Syllabus for English Language (Primary 1 – 6) 1997*. The tasks covered the four language skills: listening, reading, writing and speaking, and were designed in accordance with the learning objectives in three interrelated strands: Interpersonal (IS), Knowledge (KS) and Experience (ES).

The P.6 written assessment consisted of four sub-papers for Listening and four sub-papers for Reading and Writing, comprising a total of 124 items and 134 score points. The duration of each Listening sub-paper was approximately 30 minutes, while each Reading and Writing sub-paper was 50 minutes. Some items appeared in the Listening and Reading sub-papers acting as inter-paper links. The oral assessment consisted of 16 sub-papers. The composition of the P.6 sub-papers is summarised in Table 7.11.

**Table 7.11 Composition of P.6 Sub-papers**

Written Assessment					Speaking Assessment											
Basic Competency	No. of Items (Score Points)				Basic Competency	No. of Items (Score Points)										
<b>Listening</b> L3-L-1-P6BC (discriminating sounds) L4-L-2-P6BC (language use) L4-L-3-P6BC (listening strategies)	6EL1	6EL2	6EL3	6EL4	L3-R-3-P6BC (reading aloud)	6ES1/ 6ES3 2(8)	6ES5/ 6ES7 2(8)	6ES9/ 6ES11 2(8)	6ES13/ 6ES15 2(8)							
	2(2)	1(1)	1(1)	2(2)		L3-S-3-P6BC (ideas)	6ES1 to 6ES4 4(16)	6ES5 to 6ES8 4(16)	6ES9 to 6ES12 4(16)	6ES13 to 6ES16 4(16)						
	4(4)	3(3)	4(4)	5(5)	L3-S-4-P6BC (language use)		6ES1 to 6ES4 4(12)	6ES5 to 6ES8 4(12)	6ES9 to 6ES12 4(12)	6ES13 to 6ES16 4(12)						
23(23)	25(25)	25(25)	21(21)	L4-S-1-P6BC (pronunciation)		6ES2/ 6ES4 2(6)	6ES6/ 6ES8 2(6)	6ES10/ 6ES12 2(6)	6ES14/ 6ES16 2(6)							
<b>Reading</b> L3-R-5-P6BC (reading strategies) L3-R-6-P6BC (reference skills) L4-R-4-P6BC (language use)	6ERW1	6ERW2	6ERW3			6ERW4	30(30)	28(28)	30(30)	28(28)	1(1)	2(2)	2(2)	1(1)	3(3)	2(2)
<b>Writing</b> L3-W-3-P6BC (relevant ideas) L3-W-4-P6BC (language use)	6ERW1	6ERW2	6ERW3	6ERW4	L3-W-3-P6BC (relevant ideas)	1(4)	1(4)	1(4)	1(4)	eye contact (not B.C.)	6ES2/ 6ES4 2(2)	6ES6/ 6ES8 2(2)	6ES10/ 6ES12 2(2)	6ES14/ 6ES16 2(2)		
	1(4)	1(4)	1(4)	1(4)		1(3)	1(3)	1(3)	1(3)							
	1(3)	1(3)	1(3)	1(3)												

## P.6 Listening Items

Each student was required to attempt three listening tasks in one of the four listening sub-papers (about 30 minutes each). Listening materials were played once or twice, depending on the nature and difficulty of the task. Descriptions of the listening tasks are provided in the following Tables 7.12 and 7.13.

**Table 7.12 P.6 Listening: Distribution of Items**

<b>Basic Competency</b>	<b>Descriptor</b>	<b>No. of Items</b>
L3-L-1-P6BC	Discriminating between words with a range of vowel and consonant sounds	2
L4-L-2-P6BC	Understanding the use of a small range of language features in simple literary / imaginative spoken texts	8
L4-L-3-P6BC	Using a range of strategies to understand the meaning of simple texts on familiar topics which are delivered clearly in familiar accents	44
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>54</b>

**Table 7.13 P.6 Listening: Item Description and Question Types**

<b>Basic Competency</b>	<b>Item Description</b>	<b>Question Type</b>	<b>No. of Items (Score Points)</b>
L4-L-2-P6BC L4-L-3-P6BC	Riddles <i>6EL1/6EL3 Part 1A</i> <i>6EL2/6EL4 Part 1A</i>	Multiple choice	4(4) 3(3)
L4-L-1-P6BC L4-L-3-P6BC	Phone-in Radio Programme <i>6EL1/6EL2 Part 1B</i> <i>6EL3/6EL4 Part 1B</i>	Multiple choice	8(8) 8(8)
L4-L-3-P6BC	Story-telling – Gift <i>6EL2/6EL3 Part 2</i>	Multiple choice	9(9)
L4-L-3-P6BC	Conversation – Jobs <i>6EL2/6EL3 Part 3</i>	Multiple choice	9(9)
L4-L-1-P6BC L4-L-2-P6BC L4-L-3-P6BC	Radio Interview – Basketball Player <i>6EL1/6EL4 Part 2</i>	Multiple choice	8(8)
L4-L-3-P6BC	Story – Hiking <i>6EL1/6EL4 Part 3</i>	Multiple choice	9(9)

## P.6 Reading Items

Each student was required to attempt four reading tasks in one of the four Reading and Writing sub-papers (50 minutes each). About 25 minutes were allotted for the reading tasks in each sub-paper. Descriptions of the reading tasks are provided in Tables 7.14 and 7.15.

**Table 7.14 P.6 Reading: Distribution of Items**

Basic Competency	Descriptor	No. of Items
L3-R-5-P6BC	Using a range of reading strategies to understand the meaning of simple texts with the help of cues	58
L3-R-6-P6BC	Applying simple reference skills with the help of cues	3
L4-R-4-P6BC	Understanding the use of a small range of language features in simple literary / imaginative texts	5
<b>TOTAL</b>		66

**Table 7.15 P.6 Reading: Item Description and Question Types**

Basic Competency	Item Description	Question Type	No. of Items (Score Points)
L4-R-4-P6BC L3-R-5-P6BC	Poem – The Test <i>6ERW1/6ERW2 Part 1</i>	Multiple choice	7(7)
L3-R-5-P6BC	School Visit <i>6ERW1/6ERW3 Part 2</i>	Multiple choice	8(8)
L3-R-5-P6BC	School Newsletter <i>6ERW1/6ERW4 Part 3</i>	Multiple choice	8(8)
L4-R-4-P6BC L3-R-5-P6BC L3-R-6-P6BC	A Play <i>6ERW1/6ERW3 Part 4</i>	Multiple choice	11(11)
L3-R-5-P6BC	Fun Park <i>6ERW2/6ERW4 Part 2</i>	Multiple choice	8(8)
L4-R-5-P6BC	Directory <i>6ERW2/6ERW3 Part 3</i>	Multiple choice	9(9)
L4-R-4-P6BC L3-R-5-P6BC	A Report <i>6ERW2/6ERW4 Part 4</i>	Multiple choice	8(8)
L4-R-4-P6BC L3-R-5-P6BC	Poem – A Fun Time <i>6ERW3/6ERW4 Part 1</i>	Multiple choice	7(7)

## **P.6 Writing Tasks**

Each student was required to attempt one writing task of about 80 words in one of the four Reading and Writing sub-papers (50 minutes each). About 25 minutes were allotted for the writing task in each sub-paper. Descriptions of the writing tasks are provided in Tables 7.16 and 7.17.

**Table 7.16 P.6 Writing: Distribution of Items**

<b>Basic Competency</b>	<b>Descriptor</b>	<b>No. of Items</b>
L3-W-3-P6BC	Writing and / or responding to simple texts with relevant information and ideas (including personal experiences, imaginative ideas and evaluative remarks) with the help of cues	2
L3-W-4-P6BC	Writing simple texts using a small range of vocabulary, sentence patterns, cohesive devices and verb forms fairly appropriately with the help of cues despite some spelling and grammatical mistakes	2
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>4</b>

**Table 7.17 P.6 Writing: Item Description**

<b>Basic Competency</b>	<b>Item Description</b>	<b>No. of Items (Score Points)</b>
L3-W-3-P6BC	An Injured Dog	1(4)
L3-W-4-P6BC	<i>6ERW1/6ERW2 Part 5</i>	1(3)
L3-W-3-P6BC	Students' Spare Time Activities	1(4)
L3-W-4-P6BC	<i>6ERW3/6ERW4 Part 5</i>	1(3)

## P.6 Speaking Tasks

Each student was required to attempt either ‘Reading Aloud and Teacher-Student Interaction’ or ‘Presentation’ in one of the 16 sub-papers (each sub-paper was about 5 minutes in length including preparation time). A set of four sub-papers were allocated to each session, totaling four sessions over two days of oral assessment. Different sub-papers were derived from different topics: *Library* (6ES01 & 6ES08), *Public Transport in Hong Kong* (6ES02 & 6ES05), *Family Time* (6ES03, 6ES04, 6ES06 & 6ES07), *Healthy Living* (6ES09, 6ES12, 6ES14 & 6ES15), *Sports* (6ES10 & 6ES13) and *Healthy Eating* (6ES11 & 6ES16). Descriptions of the speaking tasks are provided in Table 7.18.

**Table 7.18 P.6 Speaking: Distribution of Tasks**

<b>Basic Competency</b>	<b>Task Description</b>	<b>Descriptor</b>
L3-R-3-P6BC	Reading Aloud <i>6ES01, 6ES03, 6ES05, 6ES07, 6ES09, 6ES11, 6ES13 &amp; 6ES15</i>	Showing a basic understanding of simple and familiar texts by reading aloud the texts with comprehensible pronunciation and generally appropriate pace, stress, rhythm and intonation
L3-S-3-P6BC	Teacher-Student Interaction <i>6ES01, 6ES03, 6ES05, 6ES07, 6ES09, 6ES11, 6ES13 &amp; 6ES15</i>	Providing and / or exchanging (asking and answering) simple information and ideas (including personal experiences, imaginative ideas and evaluative remarks), and attempting to provide some elaboration with the help of cues
L3-S-4-P6BC		Using a small range of vocabulary, sentence patterns and cohesive devices to convey simple information and ideas fairly appropriately with the help of cues despite some grammatical mistakes
L4-S-1-P6BC		Pronouncing familiar words comprehensibly
L3-S-3-P6BC	Presentation <i>6ES02, 6ES04, 6ES06, 6ES08, 6ES10, 6ES12,</i>	Providing and / or exchanging (asking and answering) simple information and ideas (including personal experiences, imaginative ideas and evaluative remarks), and attempting to provide some elaboration with the help of cues
L3-S-4-P6BC	<i>6ES14 &amp; 6ES16</i>	Using a small range of vocabulary, sentence patterns and cohesive devices to convey simple information and ideas fairly appropriately with the help of cues despite some grammatical mistakes

## ***Performance of P.6 Students with Minimally Acceptable Levels of Basic Competence in TSA 2008***

### **P.6 Listening**

In listening, students with minimally acceptable levels of basic competence were able to: extract specific information, infer simple information, identify the moods of the speakers and discriminate between initial consonants and mid consonants. They were also capable of understanding the overall meaning of simple spoken texts on familiar topics.

#### ***Specific Information***

- In the conversation ‘Phone-in Radio Programme’, the majority of students could interpret when Tom’s friend moved away as Tom said, ‘Two years ago, my very best friend Alan went to Australia to study’ (6EL1/6EL2 Part 1B Q.4) and what happened to Judy when Mary said, ‘...my best friend, Judy. She has moved to Canada’ (6EL3/6EL4 Part 1B Q.5). In the story ‘Gift’ (6EL2/6EL3 Part 2), they were also capable of interpreting what Auntie Mary liked by extracting the information ‘Auntie Mary was interested in reading books’ (Q.3).
- Most students could extract specific information from pictorial cues given as options, e.g. ‘Jenny’s gift’ was identified by extracting the information ‘she (Mary) glued the photos onto the paper and made a book...she put the book into a pretty gift box’ (6EL2/6EL3 Part 2 ‘Gift’ Q.7); ‘what Tom and Alan did on Lantau Island’ was identified by referring to information: ‘we slept outside on a beach, barbecued and went swimming in the sea’ (6EL1/6EL2 Part 1B ‘Phone-in Radio Programme’ Q.6).
- In the radio interview ‘Basketball Player’ (6EL1/6EL4 Part 2), many students were able to interpret the height of the guest when he said, ‘...in metres, 2.29’ (Q.2).

#### ***Main Ideas***

- The majority of students were competent in interpreting the main ideas in spoken texts with the pictorial cues given, e.g. what John wants to be someday was understood by referring to ‘Teaching is interesting but I (John) like painting very much. Maybe I can be an artist or an art teacher...’ (6EL2/6EL3 Part 3 ‘Jobs’ Q.8).

### *Tone*

- The majority of students were able to identify the speaker's tone of voice, e.g. Mary sounded sad when she greeted the host of the phone-in radio programme (6EL3/6EL4 Part 1B Q.4).

### *Sounds*

- The majority of students were able to distinguish between initial consonants, e.g. /j/ (Jack) correctly from /b/ (Black) and mid consonants, e.g. /m/ (Jackman) from /s/ (Jackson) (6EL1-6EL4 Part 1B 'Phone-in Radio Programme' Q.1).

## **P.6 Reading**

Students with minimally acceptable levels of basic competence were capable of extracting specific information from a poster and a notice. They could interpret unfamiliar expressions and infer information that was not explicitly stated in informational texts.

### *Text-types*

- The majority of students could identify different text-types, such as a poster (6ERW2/6ERW4 Part 2 'Fun Park' Q.1).

### *Unfamiliar Expressions*

- Many students were able to interpret the meaning of unfamiliar expressions such as 'haunted attractions' in a poster (6ERW2/6ERW4 Part 2 'Fun Park' Q.5). Students were successful in associating 'frightened', one of the given options, with 'haunted attractions'.

### *Specific Information*

- The majority of students were able to extract specific information, for example, when reading a notice, they could work out when to meet the class teacher at the school and what to wear for a school visit (6ERW1/6ERW3 Part 2 'School Visit' Qs.2 & 3 respectively); when reading posters, they could deduce where people can buy tickets to a Halloween Party (6ERW2/6ERW4 Part 2 'Fun Park' Q.7).

### *Inference Skills*

- The majority of students were able to infer simple information not explicitly stated in a notice, e.g. students have to bring '\$30 for lunch' from the notice and so John must

bring \$30 for a 'barbecue' since students will have a barbecue at 12 noon (6ERW1/6ERW3 Part 2 'School Visit' Q.6). Also, when reading a directory, they could infer that John's sister can choose 'Old and New' since she has only \$45 which is not enough for buying tickets to other programmes but the exhibition is free of charge (6ERW2/6ERW3 Part 3 'Directory' Q.3).

## P.6 Writing

The writing assessment at this level required the completion of one writing task of about 80 words in 25 minutes. Students with minimally acceptable levels of basic competence generally understood the task requirements and produced the required word length with relevant content and ideas. Students could write with an adequate range of vocabulary, sentence patterns, cohesive devices and verb forms, though some grammatical errors and spelling mistakes were apparent.

### An Injured Dog (6ERW1/6ERW2 Part 5)

This writing task asked students to give an account of an event where a little boy saw an injured dog based on two pictures given as prompts.

*Imagine you saw a dog on the street one day. The dog was hungry and one of his legs was hurt.*

Write about 80 words. Use the following pictures and ideas for your composition.



- When and where did you see the dog?
- What happened to the dog?
- How did you feel?
- What did you do?
- What happened in the end?



Students at the minimally acceptable level of basic competence demonstrated the following characteristics:

### Student Exemplar 1

#### Content

- provides some brief ideas
- description is quite clear

#### Language

- uses a limited range of vocabulary, e.g. 'followed', 'bought', 'brought'
- use of past tense to narrate past events, e.g. 'I also went to...', 'the dog followed me', '... it became my pet', 'We felt very happy'
- some grammatical mistakes, e.g. 'I brought it to (x) home'
- uses simple cohesive devices, e.g. 'so', 'although' and 'in the end'

### Student Exemplar 1

One day, I saw a dog on the street, I could saw its leg was hurt, I also went to home but the dog followed me, I wanted to help it, so I bought some food to give it. Although I gave it food, it also followed me, I could not take care of it, so I found his master. I could not found his master, so I brought it to home. In the end, it became my pet. We felt very happy.

## Student Exemplar 2

### Content

- provides a factual account of the story
- descriptions lack clarity and coherence e.g. 'I can't found it's master. Suddenly a man said, "don't run, the thief.'

### Language

- use of dialogue conventions such as 'a man said, "don't run, the thief."'
- simple use of vocabulary concerning the dog, e.g. 'hurt' and 'hungry'
- use of basic cohesive devices, e.g. 'so' and 'then'
- attempts in constructing complex structures, e.g. 'When the dog finished it's (x) eating, it ran after me.'
- inconsistent use of past tense to narrate a past event, e.g. 'the policeman coming (came) and catch (caught) him and I saved the dog.'
- incorrect use of possessive pronouns, e.g. 'I went to find it's (its) master'

### Student Exemplar 2

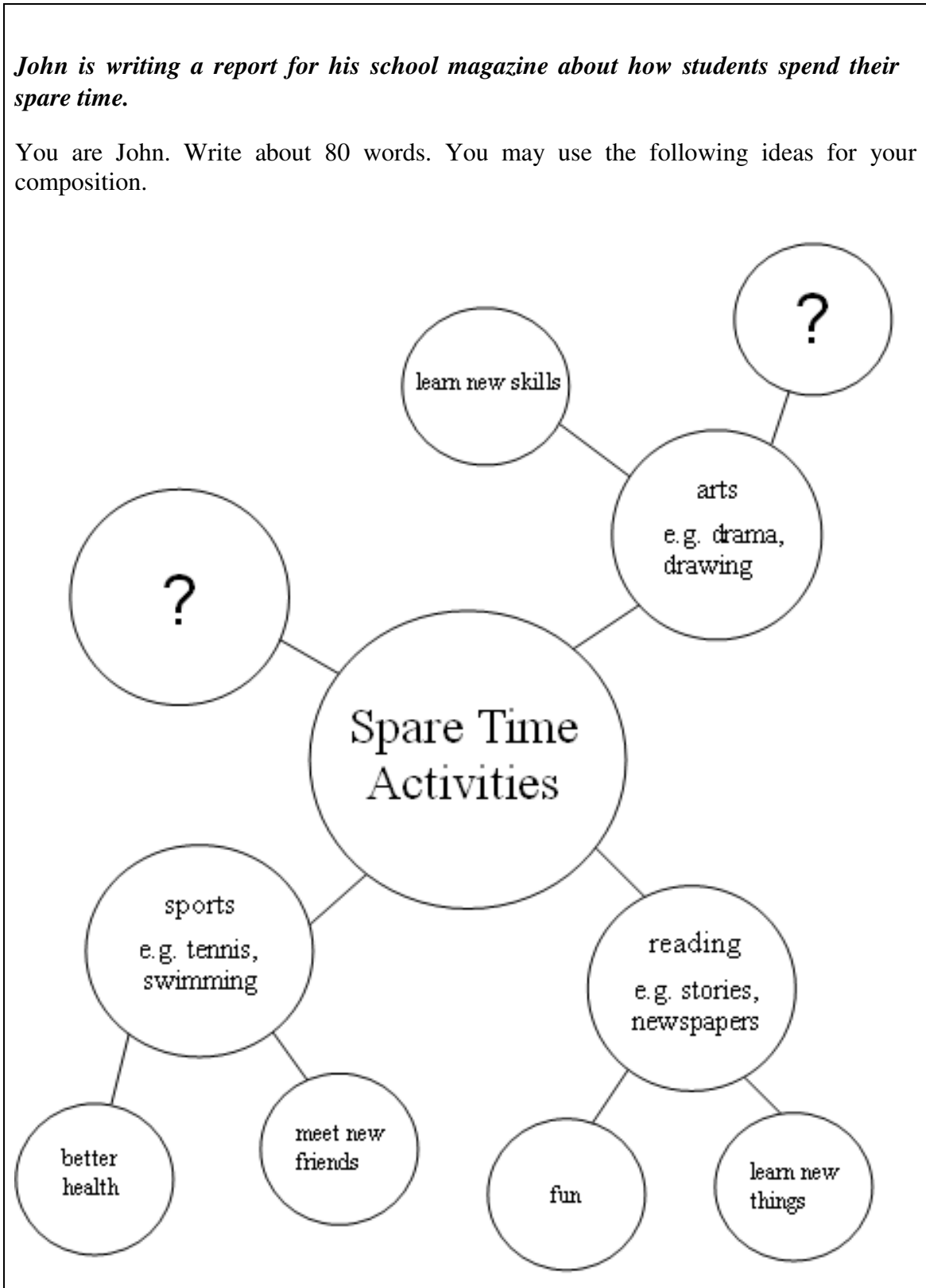
One day, I saw a dog it was hurt. I saw it was very hungry so I gave it some food. When the dog finished it's eating, it ran after me. When I ran, it will ran. When I stop, it will stop. I thought where was his master, if I found his master, the dog will not ran after me. So I went to find it's master, At last I can't found & it's master. Suddenly, a man said 'don't run, the thief'. Then the dog went to the thief and brick him. At last the policeman coming and catch him and I saved the dog.

**Students' Spare Time Activities** (6ERW3/6ERW4 Part 5)

This task asked students to write a report about the activities students were engaged in during their spare time based on the prompts given in a mind map.

*John is writing a report for his school magazine about how students spend their spare time.*

You are John. Write about 80 words. You may use the following ideas for your composition.



### Student Exemplar 3

#### Content

- provides some relevant ideas to the prompts with a few details but most are taken from the mind map except for 'they can have a health (healthy) body'

#### Language

- same sentence pattern repeated, e.g. 'they sometimes ...because they think...can' throughout the passage
- use of modals, e.g. 'they can...'
- use of cohesive devices, e.g. 'too' and 'because'
- use of limited range of vocabulary and verb forms with few grammatical and spelling mistakes

### Student Exemplar 3

#### Students' Spare Time Activities

Students do many different things in their spare time. They sometimes do arts, like drama, drawing because they think they can learn new skills. They sometimes play sports too, like tennis, swimming because they think they can have a health body and meet new friends. They sometimes like reading, like reading stories, newspapers, because they think it will be fun, and they can learn new things too.

## Student Exemplar 4

### Content

- provides some relevant responses to the prompts with limited details
- ideas are only sometimes clear and not very coherent, e.g. 'For example, some student go to sport'

### Language

- repetitious sentence patterns, e.g. '...can make you...'
- uses a limited range of vocabulary
- repetition of the verb 'go', e.g. 'student go to do arts' and 'go to play computer'

**Student Exemplar 4**  
**Students' Spare Time Activities**

Students do many different things in their spare time. For example, some student go to sport. Some student go reading books and some people go to do arts. Most of the student go to play computer games or chatting. I think that <sup>when</sup> <sup>have</sup> students spare time, they should go <sup>learning</sup> reading, <sup>doing</sup> arts and sports. Arts can make you learn new skill to drama and how to draw more beautiful. Sports can make you meet new friends and can make you better health. Reading can make you get more interesting in reading and learn new things and words. Like me, I like going to do sports because I think it is fun and even make you strong not like other student s like playing computer games.

## **P.6 Speaking**

12 or 24 students (depending on the school size) were randomly selected from each school to participate in the oral assessment. No attempt was made to report results for schools in terms of the percent achieving basic competency in speaking because of the sample size. However, a summary of the overall performance levels of students is given in the ‘General Comments on P.6 Student Performances’ section.

## ***Performance of the Best P.6 Students in TSA 2008***

### **P.6 Listening**

Students with the best performance demonstrated their ability in the following areas:

#### ***Unfamiliar Expressions***

- Students were able to interpret the meaning of unfamiliar expressions in spoken texts, e.g. The host of the radio programme says, 'Next time, we'll talk about 'My dream job' meaning the callers will talk about 'the job they most want' (6EL1–6EL4 Part 1B 'Phone-in Radio Programme' Q.8).

#### ***Specific Information***

- Students were able to extract specific information from spoken texts, e.g. John and Mary are asking Miss Wong about why she likes teaching by referring to 'Miss Wong...and we were wondering why you decided to become a Maths teacher' (6EL2/6EL3 Part 3 'Jobs' Q.1).

#### ***Inference Skills***

- Students demonstrated good inference skills in inferring information from spoken texts, e.g. Alan visits Hong Kong in December by referring to 'he (Alan) returns to Hong Kong every winter for two months' (6EL1/6EL2 Part 1B 'Phone-in Radio Programme' Q.5) and Peter took the side path because he thought the side path was easier when listening to 'It (the side path) went downhill. It seemed to go all the way down' (6EL1/6EL4 Part 3 'Hiking' Q.5).

#### ***Main Ideas***

- Students were capable of grasping the main ideas in spoken texts, e.g. Alan and Mary took a bus home at the end of the story by referring to 'Can you guess what happened?...Alan and Mary found a road and a bus stop within an hour' (6EL1/6EL4 Part 3 'Hiking' Q.7) and why Tang's nickname is 'Walking Tree' when listening to the host say, 'You must feel pretty tall here in Hong Kong' (6EL1/6EL4 Part 2 'Basketball Player' Q.3).
- Students were able to identify details to support main ideas. For example, students interpreted that writing reports was a kind of paperwork which Miss Wong found

most tiring when listening to Miss Wong say ‘what is most tiring is the paperwork’ and ‘we have to write up lesson plans...and write reports’. (6EL2/6EL3 Part 3 ‘Jobs’ Q.4)

### ***Connection between Ideas***

- Students were able to use reference words to connect and interpret ideas in a spoken text. Students understood ‘those’ which referred to the gifts that you make yourself when listening to Jenny’s mother say, “I called those ‘Gifts from the heart’” (6EL2/6EL3 Part 2 ‘Gift’ Q.6).

### ***Personification***

- Students were able to identify personification, interpretation of a hamburger as a person, when the hamburger introduced itself, ‘Turn me over. So I’m brown on both sides. Thick and juicy, I taste yummy with fries!’ (6EL2/6EL4 Part 1A ‘Riddles’ Q.3).

### ***Tone***

- Students could identify the emotional intent of the speakers. For example, Tang, the basketball player replied in an ‘unhappy’ tone when the host asked how he felt about people comparing him to other great basketball players (Q.5) and expressed his ‘proud’ feeling when talking about his experience playing for the ‘Big Bulls’ (6EL1/6EL4 Part 2 ‘Basketball Player’ Q.7).

## **P.6 Reading**

Students with the best performance demonstrated their ability in the following aspects:

### ***Unfamiliar Words***

- Students were able to interpret the meaning of unfamiliar expressions in short reading passages, e.g. ‘every child is unique’ refers to children are ‘special’ (6ERW1/6ERW4 Part 3 ‘School Newsletter’ Q.6) and ‘Mr Chan stares open-mouthed at Martin’ refers to the fact that Mr Chan is surprised by Martin (6ERW1/6ERW3 Part 4 ‘A Play’ Q.11).



### ***Main Ideas***

- Some able students were able to identify the main idea of a given paragraph and that of the full factual report about staying fit (6ERW2/6ERW4 Part 4 ‘A Report’ Qs.3 & 8).
- Some students were capable of identifying the gist of the poem by choosing the best title ‘A Fun Time’ where the boy spent some time playing in a day (6ERW3/6ERW4 Part 1 Q.6).

### ***Inference Skills***

- Students could interpret some implicit meanings in literary texts, e.g. the writer ‘does not say much’ by reading ‘...but my mouth sticks like glue’ of a poem (6ERW1/6ERW2 Part 1 ‘Poem – The Test’ Q.4).
- Students could extract information which was not explicitly stated in a newsletter, e.g. Mr Thomas Cheung will teach ‘P.4 Maths’ by referring to ‘teach upper primary Maths this year’ and ‘Mr Thomas Cheung’ has been teaching the least number of years by referring to ‘it is his first year of teaching’ (6ERW1/6ERW4 Part 3 ‘School Newsletter’ Qs.3 & 7 respectively).
- Students were also able to show good inference skills when Mr Chan doesn’t think Martin can be an astronaut since Martin ‘is not smart enough’ by inferring ‘Do you think you will become an astronaut with your school results?’ (6ERW1/6ERW3 Part 4 ‘A Play’ Q.5).

### ***Connection between Ideas***

- Students were able to use reference words to connect and interpret ideas in a literary text. Students understood ‘it’ which referred to the ‘water’ when reading ‘The pond was as blue as the sky and I jumped into it’ (6ERW3/6ERW4 Part 1 ‘Poem – A Fun Time’ Q.4).

### ***Rhyme***

- Students could identify pairs of rhymes in a poem where the end consonants were spelt differently, e.g. ‘floor’ and ‘more’ (6ERW1/6ERW2 Part 1 ‘Poem – The Test’ Q.7).

## ***Reference Skills***

- Students could find the meanings of words using definition from a dictionary entry, such as ‘beg’ to mean ‘ask for something very strongly’ (6ERW1/6ERW3 Part 4 ‘A Play’ Q.7).

## **P.6 Writing**

Students with good writing skills could write simple descriptions and narrations in paragraph form and provided many relevant ideas with supporting details. They were able to communicate their ideas effectively, clearly and coherently. They demonstrated good language skills by using a range of vocabulary, varied sentence patterns and cohesive devices. Students generally made few or no grammatical and spelling mistakes.

### **An Injured Dog** (6ERW1/6ERW2 Part 5)

Students wrote a story about an injured dog based on the prompts and pictorial cues given. Descriptions of the injured dog were coherent with supporting details and well organised.

### **Student Exemplar 5**

#### **Content**

- a very clear and interesting description with supporting details
- paragraphing adds to coherence
- use of dialogue adds to overall richness of the text
- provides an appropriate ending

#### **Language**

- successful attempts at writing complex sentences, e.g. ‘One day, I saw a dog on the street when I took a walk after finishing all my homework.’
- use of wide range of vocabulary, e.g. nervous, nodded,
- good control of tenses and language use

### Student Exemplar 5

One day, I saw a dog on a street when I took a walk after finishing all my homework. The dog was very poor and its leg was hurt!

Just when I wanted to go back home, the dog followed me! Feeling undesirable,

I helped the dog to find his master.

Then, suddenly, I saw a man who was very nervous. 'It must be the dog's master!' I thought.

Then I asked the man, "Is this your dog?" Feeling surprised, the man nodded and both the man and the dog were very happy that they met again.

I felt very happy that I helped a dog to find his master again.

## Student Exemplar 6

### Content

- provides interesting ideas with supporting details
- paragraphing adds to coherence

### Language

- use of dialogue conventions such as 'I went to the pet shop and said, "Is there any dog food?"'
- some attempts at the use of passive voice, e.g. 'were surprised by' and 'was named'
- some attempts at complex vocabulary but not used appropriately
- misuse of pronouns as possessive pronouns, e.g. 'it's (its) eyes'

### Student Exemplar 6

One day, I saw a dog sitting in the street. One of the leg of the dog was hurt. The dog was so pitty, and it looked hungry also. Its eyes show that it master didn't need it and left it alone on the street. I felt very outrageous to it master.

For a while, the dog knew my idea and followed me. Then, I went to a pet shop and said, "Is there any dog food?" "What type of the dog food do you want? We've got a lot to let you chose!" So, I'd bought the cheapest food to the poor dog.

Then, we went to my home and my mom eyes were surprised by the dog and said, "What a lovely dog? Where did you bought it?" "It was left on the street by it master... Mom, can I be it new master?" After my mom's agreement, the name Bobo was named.

## **Students' Spare Time Activities** (6ERW3/6ERW4 Part 5)

Students wrote a report about the activities students were engaged in during their spare time based on the prompts given in a mind map. Ideas were relevant with supporting details and well organised.

### **Student Exemplar 7**

#### **Content**

- many relevant ideas with supporting details about activities students are engaged in their spare time
- communicate ideas very clearly and coherently

#### **Language**

- correct use of cohesive devices e.g. 'so', 'but' and 'because'
- attempts at more complex structures, e.g. 'I think watching TV should be the way to spend our spare time' and 'If we can do this, we will all have a healthy future'
- a small range of vocabulary and expressions, e.g. 'it is fun'
- correct use of modals, e.g. '...they can learn new skills...'

## Student Exemplar 7

### Students' Spare Time Activities

Students do many different things in their spare time.

Some like drama so that they can learn new skills, some like drawing so that they can improve their drawing skills. Some students enjoy playing tennis or basketball so that they can meet new friends, some like to swim so that they have better health. Some students also enjoy reading stories because they think it is fun, some even read newspapers so that they can learn new things. But some students like watching TV with their spare time because they think it is fun.

I think watching TV should not be the way to spend our spare time, we should choose more healthy ways of spending our spare time such as reading or playing sports. If we can do this, we will all have a healthy future.

## Student Exemplar 8

### Content

- provides relevant ideas with supporting details e.g. ‘They think doing sports will make them healthier...’
- paragraphing – ideas very clear and coherent

### Language

- uses a limited range of vocabulary, sentence patterns and verb forms fairly appropriately with some awkward phrasing and spelling mistakes
- attempts at the use of the ‘that’ clause, though not always correct

## Student Exemplar 8

### Students’ Spare Time Activities

Students do many different things in their spare time. Some of them do sports. They think doing sports will make them healthier and some of them think that they can meet new friends in the time of doing sports.

Some of the other students do arts such as painting. They can learn new skills of drawing and painting. They think that painting or doing other arts can also make them to have more idea.

Some students like the activities that are fun and the activities that can stay at home to do such as reading. The students also think that they can know more things about the world.

These are the most activities that the students in Hong Kong do in their spare times.

## P.6 Speaking

Students with good speaking skills were competent in the following areas:

- In 'Reading Aloud', students read the texts aloud fluently and clearly with appropriate pausing and intonation. They made very few pronunciation mistakes.
- In 'Teacher-Student Interaction', students provided relevant answers to most of the questions and were often able to elaborate by providing examples or further details. They responded naturally and readily to different topics, using a small range of vocabulary, varied sentence patterns and cohesive devices with few grammatical mistakes.
- In 'Presentation', students were able to provide a range of ideas relevant to the topic and elaborate with details, e.g. students could make use of the pictorial cues to describe their family life such as playing chess, shopping, having a barbecue and eating out (6ES06); utilise the prompts to talk about activities engaged in public libraries including playing games, reading newspapers and magazines, surfing on the Internet and borrowing and returning books (6ES08). Students spoke very clearly and presented well-organised ideas with few mistakes in pronunciation. They used a range of vocabulary, varied sentence patterns and cohesive devices with few grammatical mistakes. Appropriate eye contact with the oral examiners was maintained throughout the presentation.



## ***General Comments on P.6 Student Performances***

### **P.6 Listening**

- There was no significant improvement in listening performances as compared to the previous year.
- Students performed well when given pictorial cues in extracting specific information and identifying main ideas.
- The majority of students were able to distinguish between various initial and mid consonants.
- Students showed steady performance in identifying the speaker's tone, for example, when the speaker spoke in a sad or happy tone.
- As in the previous year, about half the students had difficulty in connecting ideas using contextual clues or reference words and identifying the main ideas when more than one piece of information was given in a spoken text.
- Although students experienced difficulty with main ideas and inference, they performed better in interpreting information and inferring meaning when pictorial cues were given as options rather than verbal cues.

### **P.6 Reading**

- As in the last two years, students were, by and large, able to locate information in a chart and extract specific information from texts, e.g. notices and posters, and identifying specific information with the help of pictorial cues. Their skills, however, did not extend to interpreting unfamiliar words or expressions in context or extracting specific information from longer reading passages.
- Most students could interpret implied meaning in short, simple reading texts; however, almost half the students had difficulty using inference skills to interpret the meaning of a text and deducing main ideas from supporting details.
- More than half of the students performed well in interpreting poems by understanding the literal meaning and considering what was implied or suggested. Many students could identify rhyming words in a poem by sound where the end consonants were spelt

the same and a considerable number of students could identify rhyming words in a poem by sound, i.e. where the end consonants were spelt differently (e.g. 'floor' and 'more'). This suggested that some of them were identifying rhyming words by looking for similar letter patterns rather than for the actual sound of the word.

- Students had difficulty in reading because they lacked basic vocabulary which would allow them to build a schema to comprehend a written text. It has been suggested that students at this key stage would benefit from more exposure to a variety of reading materials to include riddles, poems and extended prose.

## **P.6 Writing**

- In general, students performed slightly better with a narrative 'An Injured Dog' rather than an expository piece of writing 'Students' Spare Time Activities'. However, some able students could expand their ideas and organise text into paragraphs when writing the latter.
- The two writing tasks were provided with prompts and set in a simple and familiar context. Students were able to provide interesting ideas with relevant details. For example, when writing about an injured dog, students were able to use a range of adjectives to describe the dog's appearance (e.g. tired and sick). They could also provide a factual account of the story and an appropriate ending. When writing about students' spare time activities, some students were capable of giving elaboration on the prompts provided.
- A few students failed to read the instructions of 'Students' Spare Time Activities' carefully. Instead of writing about the activities the students were engaged in during their free time, they focused on individuals, e.g. 'I' or 'John' as the subject. Some students did provide relevant ideas in response to the prompts with supporting details but most ideas were taken from the mind map without adding their original thoughts. For 'An Injured Dog', some students could only provide a brief account of the story but the descriptions lacked clarity and coherence.
- Repeated use of action verbs and language patterns was evident in some students' writing in the two tasks. The writing lacked creativity and exemplified the students' lack of vocabulary and language patterns.

- Many students could use simple cohesive devices to make their writing more coherent. Some could use varied sentence patterns and a range of vocabulary in their writing. However, past tense was not consistently used to narrate events and there were spelling mistakes. Passive voice was often used inaccurately and unnecessarily, suggesting that students had been introduced to it prematurely.
- Most students were eager to write and could produce a writing task of about 80 words. However, they had problems in grammar, spelling and sentence structures. Most students had problems in the use of possessive pronouns, e.g. 'I could not find it's (its) master'. Many students failed to use the past tense consistently to describe past events; they used other verb forms, e.g. 'it will went (would go) to...' and 'I can found (could find) his master'. Many students could not spell common words correctly, e.g. 'sunddently' for 'suddenly', 'activites' for 'activities' and 'becaus' for 'because'. The misspelling of words indicated an inadequate grasp of phonics and the number of syllables in words. Literal translation from Chinese was found in some of their writing, e.g. 'I think the dog is very happy with his family play' and 'arts is good choose too'.

## **P.6 Speaking**

- In the oral assessments, students presented their ideas well using a limited range of vocabulary and basic sentence patterns although grammatical mistakes were often apparent.
- On average, students were able to read all or most of the texts aloud quite clearly and audibly. Some students dropped end consonants for words like 'libraries', 'magazines', 'books', 'crowded' and 'bus/es/'. Words that some students had difficulty pronouncing included 'areas' & 'information' (6ES01), 'enough' & 'special' (6ES03), 'deck' & 'almost' (6ES05), 'weekends' & 'fresh' (6ES07), 'adults' & 'even' (6ES09), 'sounds', 'important' & 'course' (6ES11), 'active' & 'whether' (6ES13) as well as 'instead' & 'exercising' (6ES15).
- During the 'Teacher-Student Interaction', most students were able to provide relevant responses to most of the oral examiner's questions. Some could even provide additional details on familiar topics, such as 'Library' (6ES01), 'Family Time' (6ES03 & 6ES07).
- In their two-minute presentations, many students were able to provide relevant information and ideas based on the picture prompts when delivering a speech or telling

a story. They were able to communicate their ideas quite clearly despite some mistakes in pronunciation.

- In ‘Public Transport in Hong Kong’ (6ES02), some students had difficulty developing the main idea and limited their ideas to the words and pictures provided, e.g. instead of providing elaboration they could only list the names and the adjectives provided in the mind map. Some students also lacked the experience in taking some of the mentioned means of transport, e.g. ‘the tram’ or ‘the ferry’ which might also have hindered their performance in giving presentations.
- Sub-papers ‘Healthy Eating’ (6ES11) and ‘Healthy Living’ (6ES12) were challenging for some students. Some students had limited background knowledge about healthy foods: the names of the foods and how they affect health and hence found it difficult to answer or provide elaboration on the oral examiner’s questions during the teacher-student interaction; for ‘Healthy Living’ (6ES12), students were given four pictures illustrating some ways of keeping fit and healthy. However, some of the students misinterpreted the four pictures by giving an account of a story while others could only list the activities the people were engaged in, saying “the boy is walking” and “the girl is eating corn”. They were unable to provide relevant information and ideas on a topic given for a presentation.

## ***Comparison of Student Performances in English Language at Primary 6 TSA 2006, 2007 and 2008***

This was the third year that Primary 6 students participated in the Territory-wide System Assessment at the end of Key Stage 2. The percentage of students achieving Basic Competency is provided in Table 7.19.

**Table 7.19 Percentage of Students Achieving English Language Basic Competency in 2006, 2007 and 2008**

<b>Year</b>	<b>% of Students Achieving English Language Basic Competency</b>
2006	71.3
2007	71.3
2008	71.5

A comparison of the strengths and weaknesses of P.6 student performances in TSA 2006, 2007 and 2008 provides useful information on how teachers can help students improve. Table 7.20 summarises such a comparison.

**Table 7.20 Comparison of Student Performances in English Language at Primary 6 TSA 2006, 2007 and 2008**

Year Skill	2006	2007	2008
<b>Reading</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The main strength of P.6 students was locating specific information from a text, e.g. notices and posters, and identifying specific information when pictorial cues were given.</li> <li>• Many students were capable of inferring information in short texts which the writer had not stated clearly.</li> <li>• Almost half of the students found interpreting unfamiliar words in context and personification difficult.</li> <li>• Almost half of the students could not identify main ideas and use supporting details to deduce main ideas in longer texts.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students were generally capable of locating information in a chart, extracting specific information from a text, e.g. notices and posters, and identifying specific information with given pictorial cues.</li> <li>• Most students could infer information in short, simple reading texts, but almost half the students had difficulty using inference skills in interpreting the reason for an action in a story.</li> <li>• Many students performed well in interpreting riddles – how animals and fruits described themselves but only half of the students could identify rhyming words in a poem by sound, i.e. where the end consonants differed in spelling.</li> <li>• Almost half of the students could not use supporting details to deduce main ideas.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students were, by and large, able to locate information in a chart and extracting specific information from short, simple texts with the help of pictorial cues.</li> <li>• Most students could interpret implied meaning in short, simple informational texts; however, almost half of the students had difficulty using inference skills to interpret the meaning.</li> <li>• More than half of the students performed well in interpreting poems by understanding the literal meaning and quite a number of students could identify rhyming words where the end consonants differed in spelling.</li> <li>• Almost half of the students could not extend to interpreting unfamiliar words or expressions in context or extracting specific information from longer reading passages.</li> </ul>

Year Skill	2006	2007	2008
<b>Writing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students performed better in completing a narrative than an expository piece of writing.</li> <li>• Where tasks provided prompts in simple and familiar contexts, many students were able to provide interesting, relevant ideas with details.</li> <li>• Many students could not organise ideas in paragraphs and lacked sufficient vocabulary to express their ideas clearly.</li> <li>• Many students could write using verb forms in simple sentences with spelling mistakes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students performed better writing a narrative when the topic was related to their daily experience.</li> <li>• When writing tasks were provided with prompts and set in a simple and familiar context, students were able to provide interesting ideas with relevant details.</li> <li>• Many students could use simple cohesive devices to make their writing more coherent. Some could use varied sentence patterns and a range of vocabulary in their writing.</li> <li>• Many students had problems in grammar, spelling and sentence structures, in particular, using articles and pronouns.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students performed better writing a narrative than an expository piece of writing.</li> <li>• With adequate prompts and a familiar context, students were able to provide interesting ideas with relevant details. They could also provide a factual account of the story with an appropriate ending and give elaboration on the prompts provided in a report.</li> <li>• Repeated use of action verbs and language patterns was evident in some students' works on the two writing tasks. The writing lacked creativity and exemplified students' lack of vocabulary and language patterns.</li> <li>• Past tense was not consistently used to narrate events and many students used other verb forms. They also had problems in grammar, spelling and sentence structures.</li> </ul>

Year Skill	2006	2007	2008
<b>Listening</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• P.6 students were generally successful in identifying key words.</li> <li>• Most students had no difficulty in sequencing the pictures in the correct order.</li> <li>• Students performed better in extracting specific information from surveys.</li> <li>• Capable students showed good ability in identifying rhyming words in spoken texts and good inference skills in interpreting the reason for an action in a story.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• P.6 students were generally successful in distinguishing between various initial consonant sounds.</li> <li>• Many students were competent in sequencing pictures in the correct order even when distractors were given.</li> <li>• P.6 students were able to extract simple information from the spoken texts.</li> <li>• Students with the best performance were able to interpret personification of an object as a person and apply good inference skills. As in the previous year, they could interpret the reason for an action in a story or an event.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students were generally successful in distinguishing between various initial and mid consonant sounds.</li> <li>• Students showed steady performance in identifying the speaker's tone, for example, when the speaker sounded sad or happy.</li> <li>• About half the students had difficulty in connecting ideas using contextual clues or reference words and identifying the main ideas when more than one piece of information was given in a spoken text.</li> <li>• Students showed competence in interpreting information and inferring meaning when pictorial cues were given as options rather than verbal cues.</li> </ul>



Year Skill	2006	2007	2008
<b>Speaking</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students were able to read all or most of the texts quite clearly and audibly though some words were mispronounced.</li> <li>• Most students were able to provide relevant responses to some of the questions raised by the oral assessors. Some could even provide further details on the topics familiar to them.</li> <li>• In ‘Presentation’, many students were able to provide relevant information and ideas based on the pictures given and communicate their ideas quite clearly despite some mistakes in pronunciation.</li> <li>• Some able students could elaborate their ideas when interacting with oral assessors. However, most students had difficulty elaborating their ideas if they were unfamiliar with the topics.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students were able to read all or most of the texts aloud quite clearly and audibly but some students dropped end consonants.</li> <li>• In addition to providing additional details on familiar topics, some students responded naturally and readily to different topics.</li> <li>• In ‘Presentation’, many students were able to provide relevant information and ideas based on the picture prompts when delivering a speech or telling a story. However, some students had difficulty completing storytelling. They tended to express details in the pictures rather than the main idea.</li> <li>• Students with good speaking skills were able to provide a range of ideas relevant to the topic with some elaboration. They could communicate their ideas quite clearly despite mistakes in pronunciation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students were able to read all or most of the texts aloud quite clearly and audibly but some students dropped end consonants.</li> <li>• Most students were able to provide relevant responses to most of the oral examiner’s questions. Some could even provide additional details on familiar topics.</li> <li>• In ‘Presentation’, students presented their ideas well using a limited range of vocabulary and basic sentence patterns although grammatical mistakes were often apparent. Some students misinterpreted the pictorial cues by giving an account of a story rather than delivering a general presentation on a topic.</li> <li>• Students with good speaking skills were able to expand their ideas based on the topic given. They showed confidence and could communicate their ideas quite clearly despite mistakes in pronunciation.</li> </ul>