

Results of Primary 6 English Language in TSA 2011

The territory-wide percentage of P.6 students achieving English Language Basic Competency in TSA 2011 was 71.7%. There was a slight increase in the percentage achieving basic competency in 2011 relative to performance level in 2010.

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 121 items and 133 score points. The duration of each Listening sub-paper was approximately 30 minutes, while each Reading and Writing sub-paper was 50 minutes. The oral assessment consisted of 12 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)		
Listening	6EL1	6EL2	6EL3	6EL4	L3-R-3-P6BC (reading aloud)	6ES1/ 6ES3 2(8)	6ES5/ 6ES7 2(8)	6ES9/ 6ES11 2(8)
L3-L-1-P6BC (discriminating sounds)	3(3)	2(2)	2(2)	3(3)	L3-S-3-P6BC (ideas)	6ES1 to 6ES4 4(16)	6ES5 to 6ES8 4(16)	6ES9 to 6ES12 4(16)
L4-L-2-P6BC (language use)	0(0)	4(4)	0(0)	0(0)				
L4-L-3-P6BC (listening strategies)	23(23)	20(20)	24(24)	24(24)				
Reading	6ERW1	6ERW2	6ERW3	6ERW4	L3-S-4-P6BC (language use)	6ES1 to 6ES4 4(12)	6ES5 to 6ES8 4(12)	6ES9 to 6ES12 4(12)
L3-R-5-P6BC (reading strategies)	27(27)	27(27)	29(29)	25(25)	L4-S-1-P6BC (pronunciation)	6ES2/ 6ES4 2(6)	6ES6/ 6ES8 2(6)	6ES10/ 6ES12 2(6)
L3-R-6-P6BC (reference skills)	5(5)	2(2)	3(3)	4(4)				
L4-R-4-P6BC (language use)	2(2)	4(4)	2(2)	4(4)				
Writing	6ERW1	6ERW2	6ERW3	6ERW4	eye contact (not B.C.)	6ES2/ 6ES4 2(2)	6ES6/ 6ES8 2(2)	6ES10/ 6ES12 2(2)
L3-W-3-P6BC (relevant ideas)	$\frac{1}{2}$ (4)	$\frac{1}{2}$ (4)	$\frac{1}{2}$ (4)	$\frac{1}{2}$ (4)				
L3-W-4-P6BC (language use)	$\frac{1}{2}$ (3)	$\frac{1}{2}$ (3)	$\frac{1}{2}$ (3)	$\frac{1}{2}$ (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 twice or thrice, depending on the nature and difficulty of the task. Descriptions of the listening tasks are provided in Tables 7.12 and 7.13.

Table 7.12 P.6 Listening: Distribution of Items

Basic Competency	Descriptor	No. of Items
L3-L-1-P6BC	Discriminating between words with a range of vowel and consonant sounds	4
L4-L-2-P6BC	Understanding the use of a small range of language features in simple literary / imaginative spoken texts	4
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	46
TOTAL		54

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

Basic Competency	Item Description	Question Type	No. of Items (Score Points)
L4-L-3-P6BC	A Fire (A)	Multiple choice	4(4)
L3-L-1-P6BC	6EL1/6EL4 Part 1A		1(1)
L4-L-3-P6BC	A Fire (B)	Multiple choice	4(4)
L3-L-1-P6BC	6EL2/6EL3 Part 1A		1(1)
L4-L-3-P6BC	A Concert (A)	Multiple choice	5(5)
L3-L-1-P6BC	6EL1/6EL3 Part 1B		1(1)
L4-L-3-P6BC	A Concert (B)	Multiple choice	5(5)
L3-L-1-P6BC	6EL2/6EL4 Part 1B		1(1)
L4-L-3-P6BC	School Radio Programme	Multiple choice	7(7)
L3-L-1-P6BC	6EL1/6EL4 Part 2		1(1)
L4-L-3-P6BC	School Radio Station	Multiple choice	7(7)
	6EL2 Part2		
L4-L-3-P6BC	Summer Holidays	Multiple choice	8(8)
	6EL3/6EL4 Part 3		
L4-L-3-P6BC	Giving Clothes to Charity	Multiple choice	7(7)
	6EL1 Part 3/6EL3 Part 2		
L4-L-3-P6BC	Poem	Multiple choice	4(4)
L4-L-2-P6BC	6EL2 Part 3		4(4)

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	52
L3-R-6-P6BC	Applying simple reference skills with the help of cues	7
L4-R-4-P6BC	Understanding the use of a small range of language features in simple literary / imaginative texts	6
TOTAL		65

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

Basic Competency	Item Description	Question Type	No. of Items (Score Points)
L3-R-5-P6BC	Contents Page	Multiple choice	2(2)
L3-R-6-P6BC	6ERW1/6ERW3 Part 1A		2(2)
L3-R-5-P6BC	Back Cover 6ERW2/6ERW4 Part 1A	Multiple choice	3(3)
L3-R-5-P6BC	Glossary	Multiple choice	2(2)
L3-R-6-P6BC	6ERW1/6ERW4 Part 1B		2(2)
L3-R-5-P6BC	On the Move 6ERW2/6ERW3 Part 1B	Multiple choice	5(5)
L3-R-5-P6BC	Leaving the School (A) 6ERW2/6ERW3 Part 2	Multiple choice	6(6)
L3-R-5-P6BC	Leaving the School (B) 6ERW1/6ERW4 Part 2	Multiple choice	7(7)
L3-R-5-P6BC	Poem – Firefighter 6ERW1/6ERW2 Part 3	Multiple choice	5(5)
L3-R-6-P6BC			1(1)
L4-R-4-P6BC			1(1)
L3-R-5-P6BC	Poem – Painter 6ERW3/6ERW4 Part 3	Multiple choice	5(5)
L3-R-6-P6BC			1(1)
L4-R-4-P6BC			1(1)
L3-R-5-P6BC	Old Friends 6ERW1/6ERW3 Part 4	Multiple choice	11(11)
L4-R-4-P6BC			1(1)
L3-R-5-P6BC	Twin Wizards 6ERW2/6ERW4 Part 4	Multiple choice	8(8)
L3-R-6-P6BC			1(1)
L4-R-4-P6BC			3(3)

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

Basic Competency	Descriptor	No. of Items
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	1
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	1
TOTAL		2

Table 7.17 P.6 Writing: Item Description

Basic Competency	Item Description	No. of Items (Score Points)
L3-W-3-P6BC	Winning a Drawing Competition	$\frac{1}{2}(4)$
L3-W-4-P6BC	6ERW1/6ERW2 Part 5	$\frac{1}{2}(3)$
L3-W-3-P6BC	A Class Picnic Last Friday	$\frac{1}{2}(4)$
L3-W-4-P6BC	6ERW3/6ERW4 Part 5	$\frac{1}{2}(3)$

P.6 Speaking Tasks

Each selected student was required to attempt either ‘Reading Aloud and Teacher-Student Interaction’ or ‘Presentation’ in one of the 12 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, totalling three sessions over 1.5 days of oral assessment. Sub-papers consisted of different topics: *My Birthday* (6ES01), *My Little Sister’s Birthday Party* (6ES02), *Chinese New Year’s Eve* (6ES03), *What I Want to Be* (6ES04), *Cooking* (6ES05), *Late for School* (6ES06), *Watching Films* (6ES07), *Helping People* (6ES08), *On Rainy Days* (6ES09), *Learning English* (6ES10), *Good Friends* (6ES11) and *Getting lost* (6ES12). Descriptions of the speaking tasks are provided in Table 7.18.

Table 7.18 P.6 Speaking: Distribution of Tasks

Basic Competency	Task Description	Descriptor
L3-R-3-P6BC	Reading Aloud <i>6ES01, 6ES03, 6ES05, 6ES07, 6ES09, 6ES11</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</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	Presentation <i>6ES02, 6ES04, 6ES06, 6ES08, 6ES10, 6ES12</i>	Pronouncing familiar words comprehensibly
L3-S-3-P6BC		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

Performance of P.6 Students with Minimally Acceptable Levels of Basic Competence in TSA 2011

P.6 Listening

In listening, students with minimally acceptable levels of basic competence were able to extract specific information, grasp main ideas, understand connections between ideas, and with the help of pictorial cues, they could interpret similes. They could also discriminate between vowels and identify the moods of speakers. They were generally capable of understanding the overall meaning of simple spoken texts on familiar topics.

Specific Information

- Most students could extract specific information from spoken texts on familiar topics, e.g. the idea ‘Mary gives her sports shoes away because they are too small’ was identified by the text ‘the shoes ... are too small for me (Mary)’ (6EL1 Part 3/6EL3 Part 2 ‘Giving Clothes to Charity’ Q.5), the idea that Susan says listeners can suggest a song on their friend’s birthday by referring to ‘you (listeners) can ask us to play a song for your friend on his or her birthday’ and the idea that the radio programme will start on Tuesday lunch when the information ‘be sure to listen every Tuesday...at lunchtime’ was given (6EL2 Part 2 ‘School Radio Station’ Qs.4 & 6).
- In text in an advertisement, the majority of students were able to identify the fact that ‘Susanna Lo is famous for singing’ by extracting the information from the text ‘a famous singer, Susanna Lo’ (6EL1/6EL3 Part 1B ‘A Concert (A)’ Q.1), and answer ‘How much is each ticket?’ by extracting the information: ‘Tickets are only one hundred dollars each’ (6EL2/6EL4 Part 1B ‘A Concert (B)’ Q.5).

Gist/Main Ideas

- Most students were capable of grasping the gist of spoken texts, e.g. the radio station provides information about ‘school events’ by referring to ‘We’ll talk about many things. We’ll talk about our school – what’s new and what’s happening, for example, raising money for the new swimming pool and asking students to take part in the school drama competition.’ (6EL2 Part 2 ‘School Radio Station’ Q.3).

- Many students were competent in interpreting the main idea in a spoken text, e.g. Mary and David are talking about what to do in their holidays by referring to the text ‘Hi, David. The summer holidays start next week. What are you planning to do?’ and ‘... what are you going to do this summer, Mary?’ (6EL3/6EL4 Part 3 ‘Summer Holidays’ Q.2).

Connection between Ideas

- The majority of students were able to connect and interpret ideas in spoken texts, e.g. there are three people talking on the radio by respectively referring to the text ‘My (Susan’s) classmate, Peter Chan, and our teacher, Miss Yip, are with me (Susan) today’ (6EL1/6EL4 Part 2 ‘School Radio Programme’ Q.1). Many students were competent in interpreting more than one piece of information, e.g. the idea that Peter played a song for all Primary 6 students because they are leaving school soon by connecting two pieces of information in the spoken text: Today’s music is dedicated to all students in Primary 6. They will be moving to a new school soon. (6EL1/6EL4 Part 2 ‘School Radio Programme’ Q.5.)

Simile

- Almost all students were able to interpret similes with the pictorial cues given as multiple choice (MC) options, e.g. the writer uses ‘trees’ to describe the elephant’s legs by referring to ‘his legs as thick as trees’ (6EL2 Part 3 ‘Poem’ Q.4) and many students could interpret the elephant’s skin is like ‘stone’ when referring to ‘his skin as grey as stone’ (Q.5).

Sounds

- The majority of students were able to distinguish between vowels, e.g. /e/ ‘Fred’s’ from /æ/ ‘Brad’s’ (6EL1/6EL3 Part 1B ‘A Concert (A)’ Q.3).

Intonation

- The majority of students were able to discriminate among expressions of anger, doubt, happiness, and sadness, e.g. that Susan showed her doubt when she responded to Peter’s joke: What? Oh.h.h...Stoc-KING.’ (6EL1/6EL4 Part 2 ‘School Radio Programme’ Q.7).

P.6 Reading

Students with minimally acceptable levels of basic competence were capable of extracting specific information, interpreting main ideas, skimming for gist from informational texts, understanding connection between ideas, obtaining information from tables of contents and, with the help of pictorial cues, they could predict the likely development of the text.

Specific Information

- The majority of students were able to extract specific information, e.g. when reading the back cover of an encyclopaedia, they could identify six- to twelve-year-olds are the age group the book is designed for (6ERW2/6ERW4 Part 1A 'Back Cover' Q.1) and they could figure out that Peter's teachers helped him when reading the lines quoted from the question about Peter: 'They (The teachers) saw that I was unhappy. They talked to me and helped me a lot. Some teachers even helped me after school.' (6ERW1-6ERW4 Part 2 'Leaving the School' Q.2).

Gist/Main Ideas

- Most of the students were able to skim for gist from informational texts, e.g. when reading information about 'rockets', 'cars', 'steam trains' and 'ships', they knew the book is about transport (6ERW2/6ERW3 Part 1B 'On the Move' Q.1).
- The majority of students were capable of interpreting the main idea of a poem. For example, they were able to choose the best title 'What I Want to Be' where the poem is about the job of a firefighter (6ERW1/6ERW2 Part 3 'Poem – Firefighter' Q.6) and identify the main idea of what John has been doing in the play 'Old Friend' with pictorial cues given as options – by referring to 'He (John)'s very fit now...He was running very fast. He's also stopped eating junk food.' (6ERW1/6ERW3 Part 4 'Old Friends' Q.6).

Connection between Ideas

- Many students were able to understand the connection between ideas in a poem, e.g. the reason the writer thinks being a firefighter will be a good job is because he/she can help people by referring to 'Saving families from flames. What a good job that will be. Fighting fires every day.' (6ERW1/6ERW2 Part 3 'Poem – Firefighter' Q.2).

Simple Reference Skills

- Many students were able to obtain information about the reading materials from informational texts, e.g. when reading a contents page, the majority of them knew that they could read about different jobs on page 80 'People at work' (6ERW1/6ERW3 Part 1A 'Contents Page' Q.1).

Predicting Development

- Many students were able to predict the likely development of the text with pictorial cues given as options, e.g. what will happen to Tom when he goes to secondary school by referring to 'I (Tom) look forward to making new friends and having new experiences at a new school.' (6ERW1/6ERW4 Part 2 'Leaving the School' Q.6).

P.6 Writing

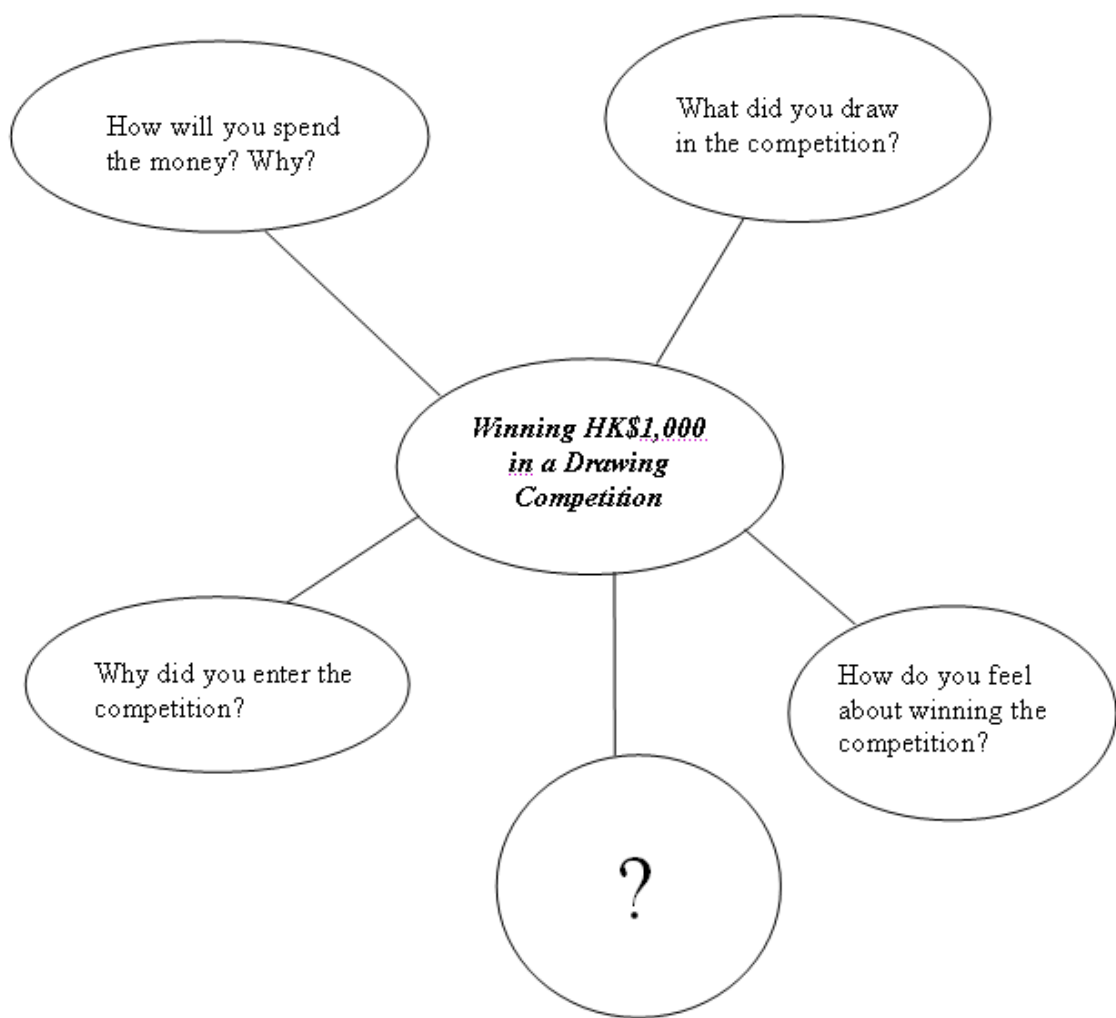
The writing assessment at this level required the completion of one writing task of about 80 words in 25 minutes. Students with minimally acceptable levels of basic competence generally understood the task requirements and produced the required word length with relevant content and ideas. Students could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

Winning a Drawing Competition (6ERW1/6ERW2 Part 5)

This writing task asked students to give an account of winning a drawing competition based on the prompts given in a mind map.

You won a drawing competition. Your prize was one thousand Hong Kong dollars. You want to write about this competition for a children's magazine.

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



Students with minimally acceptable levels of basic competence demonstrated the following characteristics:

Student Exemplar 1

Content

- provides some brief ideas
- ideas are quite clear

Language

- uses basic vocabulary, e.g. 'donate', 'suddenly', 'join'
- correct use of cohesive devices, e.g. 'At that time', 'Suddenly'
- attempts to use complex sentence patterns, e.g. 'When I went back home, I was thinking how should I use (I should use)...'
- awkward phrasing, e.g. 'my heart was happy' (I was happy)
- incorrect use of verb forms, e.g. 'have went' (had gone)

Student Exemplar 1

Winning a Drawing Competition

Recently, I won HK\$1,000 in a drawing competition. At that time,
my heart was happy. When I went back
home, I was thinking how should I use
that \$ 1,000, should I donate it, or should
I buy gift for mum and dad...
Suddenly my best friend called me,
and I told her that I have went to the
bank to join the competition. She said
that she will join it next time.

Student Exemplar 2

Content

- provides a factual account of the event with some details but lacks clarity

Language

- uses basic vocabulary, e.g. 'charity', 'meaningful', 'entered'
- attempts to use complex sentence patterns, e.g. 'I will donate (donate) the money to the charity because donating money to charity is a meaningful experience'
- some awkward sentence patterns, e.g. 'It is about in the forest are so many animals' (It is about a forest full of animals), 'I saws this competition can win HK\$1,000' (I saw this competition before and I hope I can win HK\$1,000)
- some spelling mistakes, e.g. donate (donate), saws (saw)

Student Exemplar 2

Winning a Drawing Competition

Recently, I won HK\$1,000 in a drawing competition.

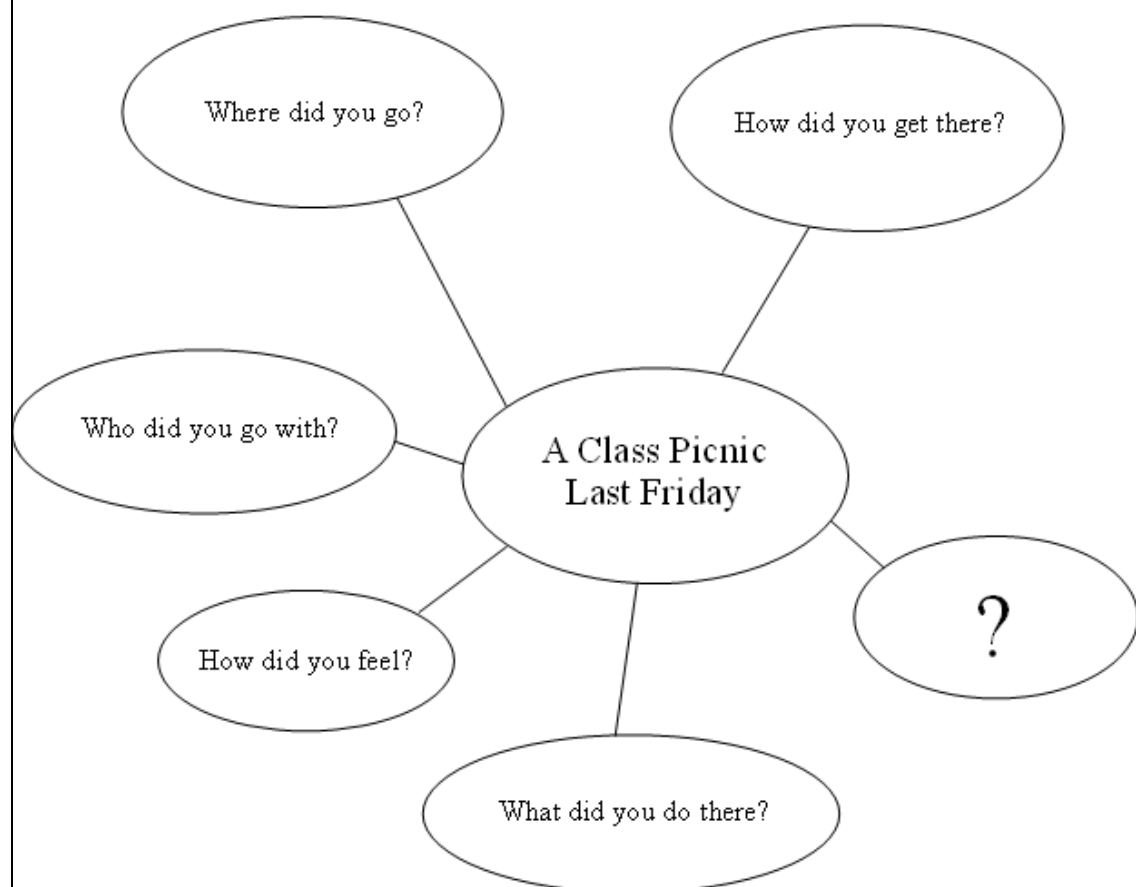
I will donate the money to the charity because donate money to charity is a meaningful experience and can help the poor people. I entered the competition because I have seen some poor people in the TV. They don't have enough food and water to drink or eat. I saws this competition can win HK\$1,000 so I thought if I win the competition, I will donate money to charity. At last I win. My picture is very beautiful. It is about in the forest are so many animals. They are lions, horses and so many. I hope my money can help the poor people.

A Class Picnic Last Friday (6ERW3/6ERW4 Part 5)

This writing task asked students to give an account of a class picnic held last Friday based on the prompts given in a mind map.

You went on a class picnic last Friday. You are going to write an article for the school magazine about the picnic.

Write about 80 words. Use the following ideas for your article.



Student Exemplar 3

Content

- provides a factual account of the event with some details but lacks clarity

Language

- uses basic vocabulary
- uses a limited range of sentence patterns, e.g. 'I sit...', 'we go to...', 'we saw...'
- appropriate use of cohesive devices, e.g. 'When', 'as', 'After'
- some grammatical mistakes, e.g. 'go to hiking'
- some spelling mistakes, e.g. 'insterenting'

Student Exemplar 3

A Class Picnic Last Friday

Last Friday, my class went on a picnic. I was excited about it. We went to a forest where was very beautiful. When we were having picnic, I sit with my friend Ryan. I fold happy as I can sit with him and talk to him.

After picnic, we go to hiking. We saw alot of animals such as tortoise, fish, bird, rabbit. They were cute.

After picnic, we went home by bus. I played 'NDS' with Ryan. It was insterenting.

This was my happiest day in my life.

Student Exemplar 4

Content

- provides some brief ideas
- ideas are quite clear

Language

- uses basic vocabulary
- attempts to use complex sentence patterns, e.g. 'When we arrived there, there was no people'
- awkward phrasing, e.g. 'That day had a big wind'
- uses a limited range of cohesive devices, e.g. 'When', 'After'
- inconsistent use of past tense
- some grammatical mistakes, e.g. 'After a (an) hour', 'Our kites flied (flew) very high'
- some spelling mistakes, e.g. 'barbeuse' (barbecue), 'Luckly' (Luckily)

Student Exemplar 4

A Class Picnic Last Friday

Last Friday, my class went on a picnic.

We went to a country park in Kowloon. We went there by a bus from school to that country park. I went with myself. When we arrived there, there was no people.

We had barbeuse. I ate a lot. They are yummy. Some of them played foot ball. And I played tennis with Alan, my best friend.

After a hour, we walked up the hall. We played kites there. Luckily, That day had a big wind. Our kites flied very high. But Alan's kite was broken by a tree. He was sad.

In the evening, the picnic is over. My class went to their homes by public transports. I was happy on Friday. What a wonderful trip!

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.

Best performance of P.6 Students in TSA 2011

P.6 Listening

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

Connection between Ideas

- Students were able to draw ideas from contextual clues in short conversations, e.g. students could figure out that it is spring when the conversation takes place from listening to Mary's mum say, "Summer will be here soon. The weather is getting warm. It's time to pack up our winter clothes." (6EL1 Part 3/6EL3 Part 2 'Giving Clothes to Charity' Q.1).
- In the news report, students could connect and interpret ideas, e.g. they were able to work out that a total of twenty three people ran out of the restaurant from listening to the news reporter say, "Ten workers and thirteen customers escaped from a fire in a hotpot restaurant this afternoon." (6EL1/6EL4 Part 1A 'A Fire (A)' Q.2.) When referring to time, the students could tell the fire stopped at 7 p.m. by referring to the section 'The fire started at about six this afternoon ...The flames were finally put out after an hour.' (6EL2/6EL3 Part 1A 'A Fire (B)' Q.3).

Predicting Development

- Students demonstrated good skills in predicting the likely development of the story, e.g. they could predict that John would find some clothes he did not need after he said, "All right. I'll try" in response to his father's suggestion: Well, John, look at all your winter clothes. I'm (John's father) sure you can find a few you do not need. (6EL1 Part 3/6EL3 Part 2 'Giving Clothes to Charity' Q.3).

Rhyme

- Students could identify pairs of rhymes in a poem by noting identical final syllable sounds, e.g. 'you' /ju:/ and 'too' /tu:/ (6EL2 Part 3 'Poem' Q.8).

Sequence

- Students were able to identify the sequence of events in a conversation, e.g. putting the sequence of suggestions by Mum and Dad about what to do before giving clothes away into the correct order (6EL1 Part 3/6EL3 Part 2 'Giving Clothes to Charity' Q.4).

Specific Information

- Students were able to extract specific information by interpreting the meaning of equivalent expressions in spoken texts, e.g. there will be another news update at 11:45 p.m. by referring to the text ‘We’ll have another news update at a quarter to midnight’ (6EL1/6EL4 Part 1A ‘A Fire (A)’ Q.5) and what Alan Poon will do in the concert by referring to the text ‘Her special guest for the concert is pianist Alan Poon. He’ll perform Susanna’s most popular song – “It Must be Magic.”’ (6EL1-6EL4 Part 1B ‘A Concert’ Q.4).

P.6 Reading

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

Connection between Ideas

- Students were able to connect and interpret ideas in a text using cohesive devices, e.g. students found out that Paul’s English has improved by referring to a few lines in the play: ‘How’s your (Paul’s) English? I (Mary) remember you (Paul) used to stay after class for extra lesson.’ and ‘It’s getting better.’ (6ERW1/6ERW3 Part 4 ‘Old Friends’ Q.3) and understood ‘that’ – meaning meeting old friends by referring to another few lines in the same play: ‘...it would be fun to see my old friends too’ and ‘Yes, I would really like that’ (Q.7).

Inference Skills

- Students could infer information which was not explicitly stated in a play, e.g. students could infer ‘they’ meant Mary’s teachers when associating teachers to the school context by referring to the line ‘At school, they’re always telling us to eat healthy food’ (6ERW1/6ERW3 Part 4 ‘Old Friends’ Q.5) and infer that the bus journey took place at 7 p.m. by referring to Mary’s line: I’m getting off at the next stop for my evening piano lesson (Q.10).

Main Ideas

- Some able students could interpret the main idea of the first two stanzas in a poem. They understood that the writer will paint during the day when referring to some details: ‘after a healthy breakfast, I will paint...’ and ‘later in the afternoon, another picture I will paint’ (6ERW3/6ERW4 Part 3 ‘Poem – Painter’ Q.3).

Onomatopoeia

- Students could identify words which sound like the things they represent, e.g. ‘boom’ which is the sound of thunder (6ERW2/6ERW4 Part 4 ‘Twin Wizards’ Q.5).

Predicting Development

- Students could predict the likely development of the text, e.g. they could predict that Mary would call Paul after the bus journey by referring to the lines in the play where two old friends exchanged phone numbers and according to their dialogue, they enjoyed seeing their old friends (6ERW1/6ERW3 Part 4 ‘Old Friends’ Q.11).

Reference Skills

- Students could find the meanings of words using definition and examples from a dictionary entry, such as ‘dream’ to mean ‘imagine something’ by referring to the first line of the poem ‘I dream of being a firefighter/painter someday’ (6ERW1/6ERW2 Part 3 ‘Poem – Firefighter’ & 6ERW3/6ERW4 Part 3 ‘Poem – Painter’ Q.7) and ‘spell’ which means ‘spoken words which people believe have magical power’ by referring to ‘She (The old woman) splashed the water onto the boys’ heads and put a spell on them’ (6ERW2/6ERW4 Part 4 ‘Twin Wizards’ Q.10).

Sequence

- Students were able to identify the sequence of events, e.g. the topics Paul and Mary talked about in the play (6ERW1/6ERW3 Part 4 ‘Old Friends’ Q.12).

Unfamiliar Words

- Students were able to interpret the meaning of unfamiliar words in different reading texts, e.g. when reading a poem, they understood the meaning of ‘rescue’ by choosing the correct example: A man climbed a tree to bring a frightened cat down (6ERW1/6ERW2 Part 3 ‘Poem – Firefighter’ Q.5) and when reading a play, they could interpret the meaning of ‘challenging’ as ‘difficult’ from the context – ‘It’s easy to play badminton but I prefer to play tennis. It’s more challenging.’ (6ERW1/6ERW3 Part 4 ‘Old Friends’ Q.8).

P.6 Writing

Students with good writing skills could write simple descriptions and narrations in paragraph form and provide 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, sentence patterns and cohesive devices. Students generally made few or no grammatical and spelling mistakes.

Winning a Drawing Competition (6ERW1/6ERW2 Part 5)

Students gave an account of winning a drawing competition based on the prompts given in a mind map. Ideas were very clear and coherent with supporting details.

Student Exemplar 5

Content

- provides interesting ideas with plenty of supporting details
- ideas are very clear
- coherent links between sentences within paragraphs
- gives an appropriate ending

Language

- uses a good range of vocabulary
 - verbs: 'touched', 'donated', 'understand'
 - adjectives: 'blind', 'deaf'
 - nouns: 'competitors', 'meaning', 'countries', 'encouragement', 'champion', 'charity', 'nations'
- good use of complex sentence patterns, e.g. 'I really thank my mom who gave me the main idea of the painting', 'Hopes are everywhere wherever there are children'
- appropriate use of prepositions, e.g. good 'at', the meaning 'of'
- appropriate use of cohesive devices, e.g. 'but', 'too', 'and'

Student Exemplar 5

Winning a Drawing Competition

Recently, I won HK\$1,000 in a drawing competition. I was happy that I could win among those competitors. Actually I was not good at drawing, but I think the meaning of the painting touched the people's heart. It is a crowd of children from different countries with different nations... They're holding hands, but some of them are even blind or deaf... But they all have their ^{own} dreams. I hope people will understand the meaning of the painting: Hopes are everywhere... wherever there are children.

I really thank my mom, who gave me the main idea of the painting, and always supporting me. Thank you for her encouragement or else I won't be the champion of this competition. I was glad she's happy too!

All of the money will be donated to the charity and I hope it will help the poor.

Student Exemplar 6

Content

- provides interesting ideas with plenty of supporting details
- ideas are very clear
- coherent links between sentences within paragraphs
- gives an appropriate ending

Language

- uses a good range of vocabulary
 - verbs: 'entered', 'noticed', 'thank', 'improve', 'donate', 'taught'
 - adjectives: 'grand', 'historical', 'useful', 'surprised'
 - nouns: 'building', 'elderly'
- good use of complex sentence patterns, e.g. 'I want to tell others that I had a grand, beautiful and historical school building', 'At last, I would like to thank my mother because she helps me a lot...'
- appropriate use of modals, e.g. 'can', 'would'
- appropriate use of cohesive devices, e.g. 'because', 'at last'
- a few grammatical mistakes, e.g. 'I drewed (drew)'

Student Exemplar 6

Winning a Drawing Competition

Recently, I won HK\$1,000 in a drawing competition. I entered this drawing competition because I love drawing a lot. I drew my primary school in the competition, I want to tell others that I had a grand, beautiful and historical school building, I love my school so much.

When I noticed that I have won this competition, I felt surprised and happy anyway. I will spend this \$1,000 dollars for buying some useful books, that can help me improve my english. I will also donate some money for the elderly, I hope I can help them from buying some new clothes or others.

At last, I would like to thank my mother because she helps me a lot in drawing beautiful pictures and she had taught me many about arts. Thank you very much!

A Class Picnic Last Friday (6ERW3/6ERW4 Part 5)

Students wrote an account of a class picnic which was held last Friday. Relevant ideas were given with plenty of supporting details based on the prompts given. Ideas were very clear and well organized.

Student Exemplar 7

Content

- provides interesting ideas with plenty of supporting details
- ideas are very clear
- coherent links between sentences within paragraphs
- gives an appropriate ending

Language

- uses a good range of vocabulary
 - verbs: 'brought', 'screamed', 'scare'
 - adjectives: 'delicious', 'worried', 'exciting'
 - nouns: 'sausages', 'badminton', 'seconds'
 - others: 'found out', 'burst (burst) into laughter', 'all of a sudden', 'settled down'
- good use of complex sentence patterns, e.g. 'We went there by school bus which was offered by the school in the morning', 'Mary burst (burst) into laughter and we did so'
- appropriate use of prepositions, e.g. we went there 'by' bus, arrived there 'at' eight o'clock, worried 'about'
- good control of tenses and makes few grammatical mistakes

Student Exemplar 7

A Class Picnic Last Friday

Last Friday, my class went on a picnic. We went to the Monkey Hill Country Park. We went there by school bus which was offered by the school in the morning. We arrived there at eight o'clock.

We brought plenty of food such as sausages, potato chips, chicken wings and pork chops. We settled down and started to play. Some classmates flew beautiful kites, some played badminton and some played volleyball. Then we had our lunch.

We had a barbecue. The food was very delicious. After lunch, we played hide-and-seek together. I was the one who found out the classmates. After thirty seconds, I started to find. I almost found out all of my classmates but Mary was disappeared. We were very worried about her so we tried to find her.

'Wah!?' Mary screamed all of a sudden. She was hiding behind a tree and tried to scare us. We were all shocked. Mary bursted into laughter and we did so.

The class picnic was very exciting and I was very happy. I hope we can have another one next year.

Student Exemplar 8

Content

- provides interesting ideas with plenty of supporting details
- ideas are very clear
- coherent links between sentences within paragraphs
- gives an appropriate ending

Language

- uses a range of vocabulary
 - verbs: 'arrived', 'found', 'talked', 'yelled', 'thought', 'try'
 - adjectives: 'cute', 'excited'
 - adverbs: 'loudly', 'suddenly'
 - nouns: 'country side', 'snacks', 'hide-and-seek'
- correct use of complex sentence patterns, e.g. 'After we arrived, we found...', 'A lot of people yelled but I didn't'
- use of dialogue convention, e.g. "It's time to go now!"
- a few grammatical mistakes, e.g. 'Although it was late, [but] I was very happy!'

Student Exemplar 8

A Class Picnic Last Friday

Last Friday, my class went on a picnic. After we met at school, we went to the country side by bus.

After we arrived, we found a place to have a seat. Daisy, Jasmine and I were in group. We put the snacks and drinks on the table cloth. We talked a while and then we went to play hide-and-seek.

"It's time to go now!" The teacher said loudly. Suddenly, some monkeys came out. A lot of people yelled but I didn't. I thought the monkeys were cute! I suggested, "Why don't we try to feed them?" The teacher and students thought it was a good idea so we fed them for fifteen minutes. After that, we left the country side. Although it was late, but I was very happy!

I am still very happy and excited now. I am looking forward to have this picnic again.

P.6 Speaking

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

- In the 'Reading Aloud' component, students showed competence in reading the texts aloud fluently and clearly with appropriate pausing and intonation. They made very few mistakes in pronunciation.
- In 'Teacher-Student Interaction', students provided relevant answers to most of the questions and responded naturally and readily to different topics. They could also elaborate on some of the questions by providing further details in their responses. They could use a good range of vocabulary and basic sentence patterns with few grammatical mistakes.
- In the two-minute 'Presentation', students were able to provide a range of ideas relevant to the topic and elaborate with some details, e.g. students could make use of the pictorial cues and written prompts to give a short talk on what they wanted to be when they grew up including where they would work, what they would do and the reasons why they would choose the job, etc. (6ES04). Alternatively, some told a story about a boy who got lost in a megastore (6ES12). Students presented well-organized ideas clearly with few mistakes in pronunciation. They used a range of vocabulary, varied sentence patterns and cohesive devices with few grammatical errors. Appropriate eye contact with the oral examiners was also maintained during the presentation.

General Comments on P.6 Student Performances

P.6 Listening

- There was no significant improvement in listening performances over the previous years. In previous years, most students performed well in some listening skills when pictorial cues were given as MC options, e.g. extracting specific information, grasping main ideas, understanding connections between ideas. This year, the majority of students also performed well in these skills even without the help of pictorial cues. Moreover, students performed better on tasks with familiar topics, (e.g. school radio station, what students do during summer holidays and donating clothes), than on unfamiliar topics, (e.g. advertisement for a charity concert, poem about wild animals and news report about a fire).
- Students showed steady performance in discriminating among expressions of happiness, sadness, doubt and anger.
- Many students were able to distinguish between the stressed and unstressed sounds and between vowels.
- As in the previous years, some students had difficulty in connecting ideas using contextual clues or reference words but a slight improvement was observed in identifying main ideas in a spoken text when more than one piece of information was given.
- Students' steady performance in interpreting information and predicting the likely development of the spoken texts was not limited to items where pictorial cues were given as MC options. They also performed steadily in these skills when written cues were given as MC options.
- Students showed better performance in items involving prediction than when such items were first introduced. For example, students showed a substantial improvement in predicting the likely development of the conversation, e.g. what the host would say next after he said "That's all for today" in TSA 2010 as compared to what Miss Yip would say next after she said "That's all for now" in TSA 2011. However, the data from these two years showed that students still had difficulty interpreting the meaning of time expressions, such as 'a quarter to' and 'a quarter past'.

P.6 Reading

- Students generally performed better in reading tasks on familiar topics, e.g. school life, keeping healthy and meeting old friends.
- As in the previous years, a considerable number of students were capable of identifying main ideas, interpreting unfamiliar expressions, predicting the likely development of the text and sequencing events as well as simply extracting information. However, their skills did not extend to interpreting unfamiliar words or expressions from context or connecting ideas from a text involving continuous prose.
- The majority of students could grasp the gist and extract simple facts from informational texts, e.g. encyclopaedia and glossaries, but less than half of the students were able to infer information which was not explicitly stated in a written text.
- Quite a number of students understood the use of some language features in simple literary texts, e.g. simile and onomatopoeia. However, students by and large had difficulty in identifying alliteration, repetition of initial consonant letters (or sounds) in two or more different words in a row, with an example given. Understanding the use of these language features is important because it could arouse students' interest in reading and appreciating literary texts.
- As in the previous years, quite a number of students could find the meanings of words by using definition and examples from a dictionary entry. Nevertheless, their dictionary skills still need development. Moreover, many students had difficulty distinguishing between basic parts of speech, e.g. the difference between a noun and a verb.
- Students lacked the skills of building a cognitive schema to comprehend a written text. Apart from grasping basic vocabulary, as mentioned in the previous years, these skills also include interpreting information and connecting ideas using contextual clues.
- It has been suggested that students at this key stage would benefit from exposure to a broader variety of reading materials including riddles, poems and extended prose. Exposure to such genres would encourage use of pronominal reference and lexical cohesion to connect ideas in a text.

P.6 Writing

- In general, there were no significant differences in student performance between the narrative ‘Winning a Drawing Competition’ and the informal letter ‘A Class Picnic Last Friday’.
- These two writing tasks were provided with prompts and set in a context where students’ writing ability could be fully stretched, even for able students. For ‘Winning a Drawing Competition’, some capable students were able to provide interesting and imaginative ideas with relevant details. They were also able to give good descriptions of their drawings by providing interesting ideas, such as protecting the Earth, helping people in need and saving endangered animals. When writing about how they spent HK\$1,000, some of them were able to write according to their own experience, for example, using the money to hold a fund-raising fair for the elderly. Some of them were able to use a good range of vocabulary to describe their feelings about winning the competition, e.g. ‘I couldn’t believe my ears’, ‘I was overjoyed’, ‘as happy as a bird’ and ‘to my astonishment’. Some showed successful attempts at complex sentences and indirect speech, which added to the overall textual richness. Most of them were also able to use cohesive devices to link ideas. A number of them created coherent links by using topic sentences and developing ideas within a paragraph. A few even gave concluding remarks with a moral perspective, e.g. ‘giving makes you happier than taking’. When writing a recount of a class picnic, some able students were capable of providing many details, such as the date, the time, the place and the activities they were engaged in. Some students could even write about a problem that happened, e.g. ‘a classmate slipped over and got hurt’, and how they solved that problem. Ideas were well organized and most of them could give an appropriate ending to the story.
- For ‘Winning a Drawing Competition’, a very small number of students misunderstood the question and wrote about a lucky draw instead of a drawing competition. However, these were not the weakest students of the cohort. They were able to write about how they spent the money and how they felt in this event. For ‘A Class Picnic Last Friday’, most students were familiar with the topic and they managed to adequately write using relevant ideas according to their own experience.
- Problematic language patterns and awkward phrasing were evident in some students’ work on the two writing tasks. This showed students lacked adequate vocabulary and

language patterns to express themselves. Their incorrect use of language patterns was mostly traceable to L1 interference.

- As in previous years, many students could use simple cohesive devices to make their writing more coherent. Some were able to use varied sentence patterns and a range of vocabulary in their writing. However, repeated use of action verbs and inconsistent use of past tense to narrate past events were found and spelling mistakes were common. Passive voice was often used inaccurately and unnecessarily.
- Most students were eager to write and were able to produce a written task of 80 words in length. However, they had problems with grammar, spelling and sentence structures. Most students had problems with the use of the existential 'there' structure. Instead of writing 'There was a big wind that day', they wrote 'That day had a big wind'. A number of students used 'a drawer' to describe someone who draws instead of using 'a painter' or 'an artist'. Many students, including some capable ones, failed to use past tense consistently, e.g. 'I don't' (didn't) want to join because I had no idea' or regularized the past tense of irregular verbs, e.g. 'drawed' instead of 'drew' and 'taked' instead of 'took'. Many students misspelled common words, e.g. 'familes' for 'families', 'excited' for 'excited' and 'donte' for 'donate'. The misspelling of words indicated an inadequate grasp of phonics and the syllable structure of words. Literal translation from Chinese was found in some of their writing, e.g. 'I were very happy because is frist I won the competition' (I was very happy because I won the competition for the first time).

P.6 Speaking

- Students were generally able to present their ideas clearly using a limited range of vocabulary and basic sentence patterns though some grammatical mistakes were apparent.
- In the 'Reading Aloud' component, more than half of the students were able to read the texts fluently and clearly despite a few mistakes in pronunciation. Some students had difficulty pronouncing words like 'special', 'delicious' (6ES01), 'cousins' (6ES03), 'Italian', 'recipes' (6ES05), 'action', 'amusing' (6ES07), 'dessert', 'lying' (6ES09), and 'happiness', 'support' (6ES11). A lot of students dropped end consonants for words such as 'baked', 'shouted', 'clapped' (6ES01), 'home-cooked' (6ES05), and 'started', 'used' (6ES07). Moreover, they had difficulty pronouncing words with more than three syllables, such as 'celebrated' (6ES01) and 'decorating' (6ES03). Words with 'v'

sounds like ‘Eve’ (6ES03), ‘invites’ (6ES05) and ‘movies’ (6ES07) were also problematic. Moreover, some students could not pronounce words with initial consonant blends correctly, such as ‘clapped’ (6ES01), ‘prepares’ (6ES03), ‘fresh’ (6ES05) and ‘friends’ (6ES09). They also had problems with long vowel sounds in words, like ‘choose’, ‘believes’ (6ES05), and indeed (6ES11). Some had problems with consonant digraphs like ‘eleventh’ (6ES01), ‘dishes’ (6ES03), ‘health’, Thai’ (6ES05), and ‘shoulder’ (6ES11).

- Students were generally able to provide relevant answers to the questions in ‘Teacher-Student Interaction’. Some students failed to give elaboration on topics they were familiar with while others could provide additional details on some more familiar topics, such as *Cooking* (6ES05) and *On Rainy Days* (6ES09). Students seemed to perform better with questions that elicited specific information, such as ‘Who do you usually have dinner with?’ (6ES05). They did not respond as well to questions beginning with ‘how’ or ‘why’, such as ‘How do you celebrate _____ (the festival the student has mentioned)?’ (6ES03) and ‘Why is he/she your best friend?’ (6ES011).
- In the ‘Presentation’ component, students were generally able to give a talk or tell a story based on the information provided. Many of them could communicate their ideas quite clearly despite a few mistakes in pronunciation. Most students were awarded a bonus score for having appropriate eye contact with the oral examiners.
- The sub-papers *What I Want to Be* (6ES04) and *Getting Lost* (6ES12) were challenging for some students. They found the former difficult as it required them to say what they wanted to be when they grew up and give reasons for their choice. They were also expected to describe the place they would work at and what they would do at work. The task also required them to know a range of vocabulary to talk about details of a job. The latter task (*Getting Lost*) required students to narrate a story in a logical sequence and with a sensible ending. Although they understood the story plot, they showed only limited vocabulary and sentence patterns when attempting to describe what happened to John after he had got lost in a megastore.

Comparison of Student Performances in English Language at Primary 6 TSA from 2008 to 2011

This was the seventh year that Primary 6 students participated in the Territory-wide System Assessment at the end of Key Stage 2. Due to the concerns over the possible outbreak of Human Swine Influenza, the written assessments of TSA 2009 were cancelled and no data could be collected. However, the percentage of students achieving Basic Competency from 2008 to 2011 is provided in Table 7.19.

Table 7.19 Percentage of Students Achieving English Language Basic Competency in 2008, 2010 and 2011

Year	% of Students Achieving English Language Basic Competency
2008	71.5
2010	71.6
2011	71.7

A comparison of the strengths and weaknesses of P.6 student performances in TSA from 2008 to 2011 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 from 2008 to 2011*

Year Skill	2008	2010	2011
Reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 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. More than half of the students performed well in interpreting poems by understanding the explicit, literal meaning and quite a number of students could identify rhyming words where the end consonants differed in spelling. Almost half of the students could not extend to interpreting unfamiliar words or expressions in context or extracting specific information from a text where a greater reading load was required. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In general students could extract specific information, interpret main ideas, locate information, obtain information from instructions and skim for gist from informational texts. The majority of students could use the context to infer the meaning from a poem's lines but only slightly more than half of them could extract information not explicitly stated in the text. With the help of pictorial cues, many students could comprehend a poem by identifying specific information and main ideas and about half of them could interpret figurative language, e.g. personification and simile. Quite a number of students could predict the meaning of unfamiliar words or expressions from context. However, many students had difficulty distinguishing between a noun and a verb when looking up the meaning of a particular word from a dictionary. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students generally performed better in reading tasks on familiar topics, e.g. school life, keeping healthy and meeting old friends. The majority of students could grasp the gist and extract simple facts from informational texts, e.g. encyclopaedia and glossaries, but less than half of the students were able to infer information which was not explicitly stated in a written text. Quite a number of students understood the use of some language features in simple literary texts, e.g. simile and onomatopoeia. However, students by and large had difficulty in identifying alliteration with an example given. Quite a number of students could find the meanings of words by using definition and examples from a dictionary entry. However, their skills did not extend to interpreting unfamiliar words or expressions from context or connecting ideas from a text involving continuous prose.

* Due to the outbreak of Human Swine Influenza, the TSA 2009 written assessments were cancelled and no data on students' listening, reading and writing performances could be collected.

Year Skill	2008	2010	2011
Writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students performed better writing a narrative than an expository piece of writing. 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. Repeated use of action verbs and language patterns was evident in some students' works on the two writing tasks. This made their writing boring and showed students' shortage of vocabulary and language patterns. Past tense was not consistently used to narrate past events and many students used other verb forms. They also had problems in grammar, spelling and sentence structures. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In general, students performed slightly better in writing a narrative than an informal letter. Most students were able to express their ideas clearly on the two writing tasks. In writing a story, they could provide a factual account of the story and an appropriate ending. In writing a letter, they were capable of conveying their ideas clearly when suggesting places they were familiar with. Use of cohesive devices was evident in many students' works. However, lacking vocabulary and language patterns was still common in some students' writing. Most students were eager to write and could produce a written task of 80 words long. However, they had problems in grammar, spelling and sentence structures. Literal translation from Chinese was also found in some of their writing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In general, there were no significant differences in student performance between a narrative and an informal letter. For the narrative, most students could provide interesting content with relevant details. When writing a recount, they could provide a factual account of the event with some details, such as the date, the place and the activities they were engaged in. Many students could use simple cohesive devices to make their writing more coherent. However, repeated use of action verbs and inconsistent use of past tense to narrate past events were found and spelling mistakes were common. Most students were eager to write and could produce a written task of 80 words long. However, they had problems in grammar, spelling and sentence structures. Their incorrect use of language patterns was mostly traceable to L1 interference.

Year Skill	2008	2010	2011
Listening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • P.6 students were generally successful in distinguishing between various initial and mid consonant sounds. • Students showed steady performance in identifying the speaker's tone, for example, when the speaker spoke in a sad or happy tone. • 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. • Students showed competence in interpreting information and inferring meaning when pictorial cues were given as options rather than verbal cues. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The majority of students were able to distinguish between various initial consonants and between vowels. • Students performed well in some listening skills when given pictorial cues, e.g. extracting specific information, grasping main ideas, understanding the connections between ideas and identifying the sequence of events. • Some students had difficulty in connecting ideas using contextual clues or reference words and more than half of them had problems identifying the main ideas when more than one piece of information was given in a spoken text. • Although students experienced difficulty with main ideas, they performed better in interpreting information and predicting the likely development of the spoken texts when pictorial cues were given as options rather than written cues. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students generally performed better on tasks with familiar topics than on unfamiliar topics • The majority of students performed well in some listening skills even without the help of pictorial cues, e.g. extracting specific information, grasping main ideas, understanding connections between ideas. • Some students had difficulty in connecting ideas using contextual clues or reference words but a slight improvement was observed in identifying main ideas in a spoken text when more than one piece of information was given. • Students' steady performance in interpreting information and predicting the likely development was not limited to items where pictorial cues were given as MC options. They also performed steadily in these skills when written cues were given as MC options.

<div>Year</div> <div>Skill</div>	2009	2010	2011
Speaking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More than half of the students could read the texts fluently and clearly despite a few mistakes in pronunciation. Some students dropped end consonants and had problems with final consonant blend sounds, long vowel sounds as well as consonant digraphs. • Students generally could provide relevant answers to the questions. Some could even provide further details on topics familiar to them. • In 'Presentation', many students could express their ideas quite clearly based on the information provided despite some errors in pronunciation. • Students with a better performance could elaborate their ideas when interacting with oral examiners. However, some students lacked the vocabulary needed to express themselves clearly. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students were generally capable of reading the given texts aloud quite clearly but some mistakes in pronunciation were evident. Some students dropped end consonants and had problems with initial consonant blend sounds, long vowel sounds as well as consonant digraphs. • Most students were able to provide relevant responses to some of the questions. Some could even provide further elaboration on topics familiar to them. • In 'Presentation', many students could provide relevant information and ideas based on the given pictures and communicate their ideas quite clearly in spite of some mistakes in pronunciation. • Students with top scores were able to provide a range of ideas relevant to the topics with some elaboration. They could communicate their ideas clearly and readily despite some pronunciation mistakes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More than half of the students could read the texts fluently and clearly despite a few mistakes in pronunciation. Some dropped end consonants and had difficulty pronouncing words with more than three syllables. Words with 'v' sounds, initial consonant blend sounds, long vowel sounds and consonant digraphs were also problematic. • Students were generally able to provide relevant answers to the questions. Some could provide additional details on some more familiar topics. • In 'Presentation', students were generally able to give a talk or tell a story based on the information provided. Most students were awarded a bonus score for having appropriate eye contact with the oral examiners. • Students with good speaking skills were able to provide a range of ideas relevant to the topic and elaborate with some details. They presented well-organized ideas clearly with few mistakes in pronunciation.