

Results of Secondary 3 English Language in TSA 2011

The Territory-wide percentage of students achieving the S.3 English Language Basic Competency in TSA 2011 was 69.2%. The performance level of students in 2010 was also 69.2%.

Secondary 3 Assessment Design

Assessment tasks for S.3 English Language were based on the *Basic Competency (BC) Descriptors (Tryout Version) for English Language at the end of Key Stage 3 (Secondary 3)* and the *CDC Syllabus for English Language (Secondary 1 – 3) 1999*. 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 S.3 written assessments consisted of three sub-papers for Listening, Reading and Writing, comprising a total of 100 items and 109 score points. Some items appeared in all three Listening and Reading sub-papers acting as inter-paper links. The duration of each Listening sub-paper was approximately 25 minutes, Reading sub-paper was 30 minutes and Writing sub-paper was 40 minutes. The oral assessment was comprised of two components, Individual Presentation and Group Interaction, with eight sub-papers in total. The composition of the S.3 sub-papers is summarised in Table 7.21.

Table 7.21 Composition of S.3 Sub-papers

Written Assessment				Speaking Assessment		
Basic Competency	No. of Items (Score Points)			Basic Competency	No. of Items (Score Points)	
Listening	9EL1	9EL2	9EL3		9ESP1 – 9ESP8 Individual Presentation	9ESG1 – 9ESG8 Group Interaction
L5-L-2-S3BC (listening strategies)	19 (19)	25 (25)	25 (25)	L5-S-3-S3BC (ideas)	8 (4)	8 (4)
L5-L-1-S3BC (language features)	2 (2)	0	0			
Reading	9ER1	9ER2	9ER3	L6-S-6-S3BC (organisation)	8 (4)	0
L6-R-1-S3BC (reading strategies)	28 (28)	30 (30)	32 (32)	L5-S-4-S3BC (vocabulary & language patterns)	8 (4)	0
L5-R-3-S3BC (language features)	2 (2)	2 (2)	0 (0)			
L5-R-4-S3BC (reference skills)	1 (1)	1 (1)	0 (0)	L5-S-2-S3BC (pronunciation & delivery)	8 (4)	0
Writing	9EW1	9EW2	9EW3			
L6-W-1-S3BC (content)	1 (4)	1 (4)	1 (4)	L6-S-5-S3BC (strategies for oral communication)	8 (2)	8 (2)
L6-W-2-S3BC (language)	1 (4)	1 (4)	1 (4)			
L6-W-3-S3BC (organisation)	1 (2)	1 (2)	1 (2)			
L5-W-5-S3BC (features)	1 (2)	1 (2)	1 (2)			

S.3 Listening Items

Each student attempted three listening tasks in one of the three Listening sub-papers (about 25 minutes each). All parts or sections were played twice. Descriptions of the listening tasks are provided in Tables 7.22 and 7.23.

Table 7.22 S.3 Listening: Distribution of Items

Basic Competency	Descriptor	No. of Items
L5-L-1-S3BC	Understanding the use of a range of language features in simple literary / imaginative spoken texts	2
L5-L-2-S3BC	Using an increasing range of strategies to understand the meaning of simple texts on familiar and less familiar topics which are delivered clearly and in generally familiar accents	49
TOTAL		51

Table 7.23 S.3 Listening: Item Description and Question Types

Basic Competency	Item Description	Question Type	No. of Items (Score Points)
L5-L-2-S3BC	Conversation - <i>China</i> <i>9EL1 - Part 1</i>	Multiple choice	9 (9)
L5-L-2-S3BC	Interview - <i>Hong Kong's past</i> <i>9EL1 - Part 2</i> <i>9EL2 - Part 2</i>	Multiple choice	6 (6)
L5-L-2-S3BC L5-L-1-S3BC	Poem - <i>Mother</i> <i>9EL1 - Part 3</i>	Multiple choice	6 (6)
L5-L-2-S3BC	Dialogue - <i>Travel Plan</i> <i>9EL2 - Part 1</i> <i>9EL3 - Part 1</i>	Multiple choice Short answer	4 (4) 10 (10)
L5-L-2-S3BC	News Report A <i>9EL3 - Part 2</i>	Multiple choice	5 (5)
L5-L-2-S3BC	News Report B <i>9EL2 - Part 3</i>	Multiple choice	5 (5)
L5-L-2-S3BC	Personal Responses - <i>Staying Healthy</i> <i>9EL3 - Part 3</i>	Multiple choice	6 (6)

S.3 Reading Items

Each student attempted three reading tasks in one of the three Reading sub-papers. 30 minutes were allotted for the reading tasks in each of the sub-papers. Descriptions of the reading tasks are provided in Tables 7.24 and 7.25.

Table 7.24 S.3 Reading: Distribution of Items

Basic Competency	Descriptor	No. of Items
L6-R-1-S3BC	Using an increasing range of reading strategies to understand the meaning of texts with some degree of complexity	43
L5-R-3-S3BC	Understanding the use of a range of language features and other techniques to present themes, characters, experiences and feelings in simple literary / imaginative texts	2
L5-R-4-S3BC	Applying a range of reference skills for various purposes with the help of cues	1
TOTAL		46

Table 7.25 S.3 Reading: Item Description and Question Types

Basic Competency	Item Description	Question Type	No. of Items (Score Points)
L6-R-1-S3BC	Newspaper - <i>Classifieds - Jobs</i> 9ER1 - Part 1 9ER3 - Part 1	Multiple choice	5 (5)
L6-R-1-S3BC L5-R-3-S3BC L5-R-4-S3BC	Poem - <i>Food</i> 9ER1 - Part 2 9ER2 - Part 2	Multiple choice	7 (7)
L5-R-1-S3BC	Short Passages - <i>Movie Reviews</i> 9ER1 - Part 3 9ER2 - Part 3 9ER3 - Part 3	Multiple choice Short Answer	15 (15) 4 (4)
L6-R-1-S3BC	Article - <i>Police Action</i> 9ER2 - Part 1	Multiple choice	7 (7)
L6-R-1-S3BC L5-R-4-S3BC	Pamphlet - <i>Green Wetland Park</i> 9ER3 - Part 2	Multiple choice	8 (8)

(Poem used in 9ER1 and 2 written by Rex Eae Hrusoff, PFC USMC, WWI)

S.3 Writing Tasks

Each student attempted a writing task of about 150 words from one of the three Writing sub-papers. Forty minutes were allotted for the writing task in each of the sub-papers. Descriptions and topics of the writing tasks are provided in Tables 7.26 and 7.27.

Table 7.26 S.3 Writing: Distribution of Items

Basic Competency	Descriptor	No. of Items
L6-W-1-S3BC	Writing a variety of texts for different purposes with relevant and generally adequate content	3
L6-W-2-S3BC	Writing a variety of texts using punctuation marks and a range of vocabulary and language patterns with some degree of appropriateness and accuracy to convey meaning	
L6-W-3-S3BC	Writing a variety of texts with adequate overall planning and organisation (including the use of cohesive devices and paragraphs, and sequencing of ideas)	
L5-W-5-S3BC	Writing a variety of texts using the salient features of a range of genres generally appropriately with the help of cues	
TOTAL		3

Table 7.27 S.3 Writing: Item Description and Question Types

Basic Competency	Item Description	No. of Items (Score Points)
L6-W-1-S3BC L6-W-2-S3BC	Reply to an email - Giving advice <i>9EW1</i>	1 (12)
L6-W-3-S3BC L5-W-5-S3BC	Mind map - Article - Weekend Activities <i>9EW2</i>	1 (12)
	Mind map - Class Newsletter - An Accident <i>9EW3</i>	1 (12)

S.3 Speaking Tasks

Each student attempted either an ‘Individual Presentation’ (3 minutes for preparation and 2 minutes for assessment) or a ‘Group Interaction’ (3 minutes for preparation and 3 minutes for assessment). There were altogether 16 sub-papers: two sub-papers each for the Individual Presentation and Group Interaction, used in morning and afternoon sessions that took place over two assessment days. Descriptions of the speaking tasks are provided in Table 7.28.

Table 7.28 S.3 Speaking: Distribution of Tasks

Basic Competency	Task Description	Descriptor
L5-S-2-S3BC	Individual Presentation <i>9ESP1 – 9ESP8</i>	Using a range of delivery techniques (including stress, rhythm and intonation) to convey meaning generally appropriately with the help of cues
L5-S-3-S3BC		Expressing information and ideas (including personal experiences, feelings, opinions, imaginative ideas and evaluative remarks) with some elaboration
L5-S-4-S3BC		Using a range of vocabulary and language patterns with some degree of appropriacy and accuracy to convey meaning
L6-S-5-S3BC		Using formulaic expressions and a range of strategies for oral communication to establish and maintain relationships/interaction in familiar situations
L6-S-6-S3BC		Using organising techniques generally appropriately to convey meaning
L5-S-3-S3BC	Group Interaction <i>9ESG1 – 9ESG8</i>	Expressing information and ideas (including personal experiences, feelings, opinions, imaginative ideas and evaluative remarks) with some elaboration
L6-S-5-S3BC		Using formulaic expressions and a range of strategies for oral communication to establish and maintain relationships /interaction in familiar situations

Performance of S.3 Students with Minimally Acceptable Levels of Basic Competence in TSA 2011

S.3 Listening

Students with minimally acceptable levels of basic competence were generally able to understand the meaning of simple dialogues in both familiar and unfamiliar topics. Students were able to extract specific information, connect ideas using contextual clues, comprehend main ideas and understand information when dialogues were delivered clearly and in generally familiar accents.

Specific Information

- Most students were capable of extracting specific information from spoken passages. For example, when listening to a dialogue between a travel agent and a customer, students understood that the flight would depart from a certain location and they were able to give the specific details such as flight numbers and departure time.
(‘Travel Plan’ - 9EL2 and 9EL3 - Part 1 Q.2, 4, 7 and 10)

Contextual Clues

- Students were able to draw conclusions from contextual clues in short dialogues. For example, when listening to an interview between a boy and his neighbour, many students responded correctly that the neighbour got the news via the radio. A considerable number of students were also able to conclude that the neighbour thought people in London also spoke Cantonese because the news from London was in Cantonese.
(‘Hong Kong’s Past’ - 9EL1, 9EL2 - Part 2 Q.2 and Q.5)

Connecting Ideas

- Students were able to connect ideas using contextual clues. For example, when listening to two friends talking about China, many students answered correctly that old buildings in China are being torn down.
(‘China’ - 9EL1 - Part 1 Q.2)

Discriminating between a range of vowel and consonant sounds

- Students were able to discriminate between a range of vowel and consonant sounds. For example, in a conversation between a travel agent and a customer students

responded with the correct flight numbers which used different letter and number combinations.

(‘Travel Plan’ - 9EL2, 9EL3 - Part 1 Q.4 and Q.10)

Main Idea

- Students were generally capable of determining the main idea. For example, more than half of the students were able to determine what happened to the baby boy and then what the weather report said..

(‘News #2’ - 9EL2 - Part 3 Q.1 and Q.5)

S.3 Reading

Students with minimally acceptable levels of basic competence were able to understand the meaning of simple texts written on familiar topics and for various purposes, contexts and audiences. They could extract or locate specific information from different text-types such as the classified section, movie reviews and a pamphlet. Students were also capable of using inference skills in certain passages with familiar topics.

Specific Information

- Most students could extract specific information in various reading passages. For example, from a poem, quite a number of students could identify what was eaten.

(‘Poem - Food’ - 9ER1 and 9ER2 - Part 2 Q.1)

Inference Skills with Contextual Clues

- Students could comprehend information that was implied. For example, in reading the classified section and the details provided about each person, many students were able to use the context provided to infer which job best suited the job seekers.
- Students could comprehend implied information. For example, when reading the article about the police using Facebook more than half of the students were able to infer what the man wearing the mask was trying to do. About half of the students were also able to infer why the thief could have been a former employee.

(‘Police Use Facebook’ - 9ER1 - Part 2 Q.1 and Q.5)

Genre

- Students were able to determine the genre of pieces of writing. For example, many could tell that the passages were reviews.
(‘Movies’ - 9ER1, 9ER2, 9ER3 - Part 3 Q.14)

Distinguishing Fact from Opinion

- Students were able to distinguish between facts and opinion. For example, many were able to determine the occupation of Linda’s father was a fact and not the opinion of a writer.
(‘Movies’ - 9ER1, 9ER2, 9ER3 - Part 3 Q.19)

S.3 Writing

Students were instructed to complete a written assessment of about 150 words in 40 minutes. Students with minimally acceptable levels of basic competence in writing demonstrated the following characteristics:

- generally relevant and adequate content but with limited ideas and little or no elaboration
- paragraphs generally developed based on prompts with an attempt to use cohesive devices and sequence ideas appropriately
- the use of familiar vocabulary and simple language patterns with some degree of appropriacy and accuracy to convey meaning
- reasonably comprehensible pieces of writing despite a fair number of language and/or stylistic errors
- errors in tenses, incorrectly matching tense with time expressions or causing inappropriate verb tense shifts

Reply to an Email (9EW1)

In this writing task, students were asked to write a reply to an email written by a fellow student.

You are Robert. You are a member of the Student Help Group. Your friend, John, sent you an email.

Read the following email and give advice to John about his brother David. Write your email in about 150 words.

From: John
To: Robert@heligator.com
Sent: Friday, June 17, 2011 6:20 PM
Subject: Giving advice

Dear Robert,

I'm very worried about my brother David. He goes to bed very late and doesn't get enough sleep. He is often on the phone chatting to friends. He doesn't exercise and even eats junk food after dinner. His test results are getting worse and his teachers told Mum that he often falls asleep in class. I've tried to talk to him but he doesn't listen to me. Would you please tell me how to help him develop good habits?

Hope to hear from you soon. Thank you.

John

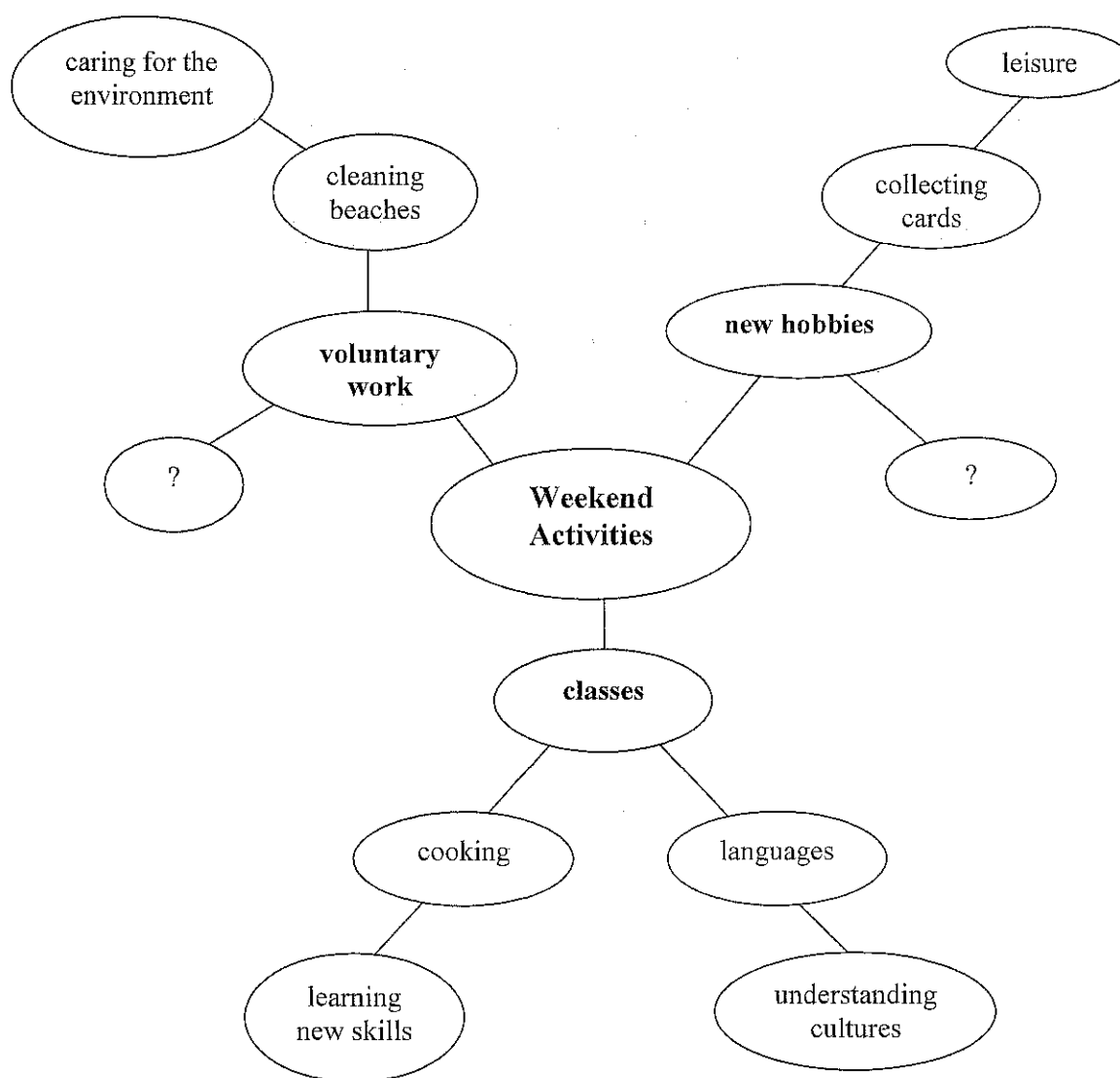
END OF PAPER

Weekend Activities (9EW2)

In this writing task, students were asked to write an article about weekend activities that students could engage in as well as to give reasons.

Your teacher has asked you to write an article about weekend activities for the school magazine. Suggest ways your schoolmates can make good use of their time and give reasons for your suggestions.

You may use some of the ideas from the following mind map and/or your own ideas in your writing. Write about 150 words for the article.



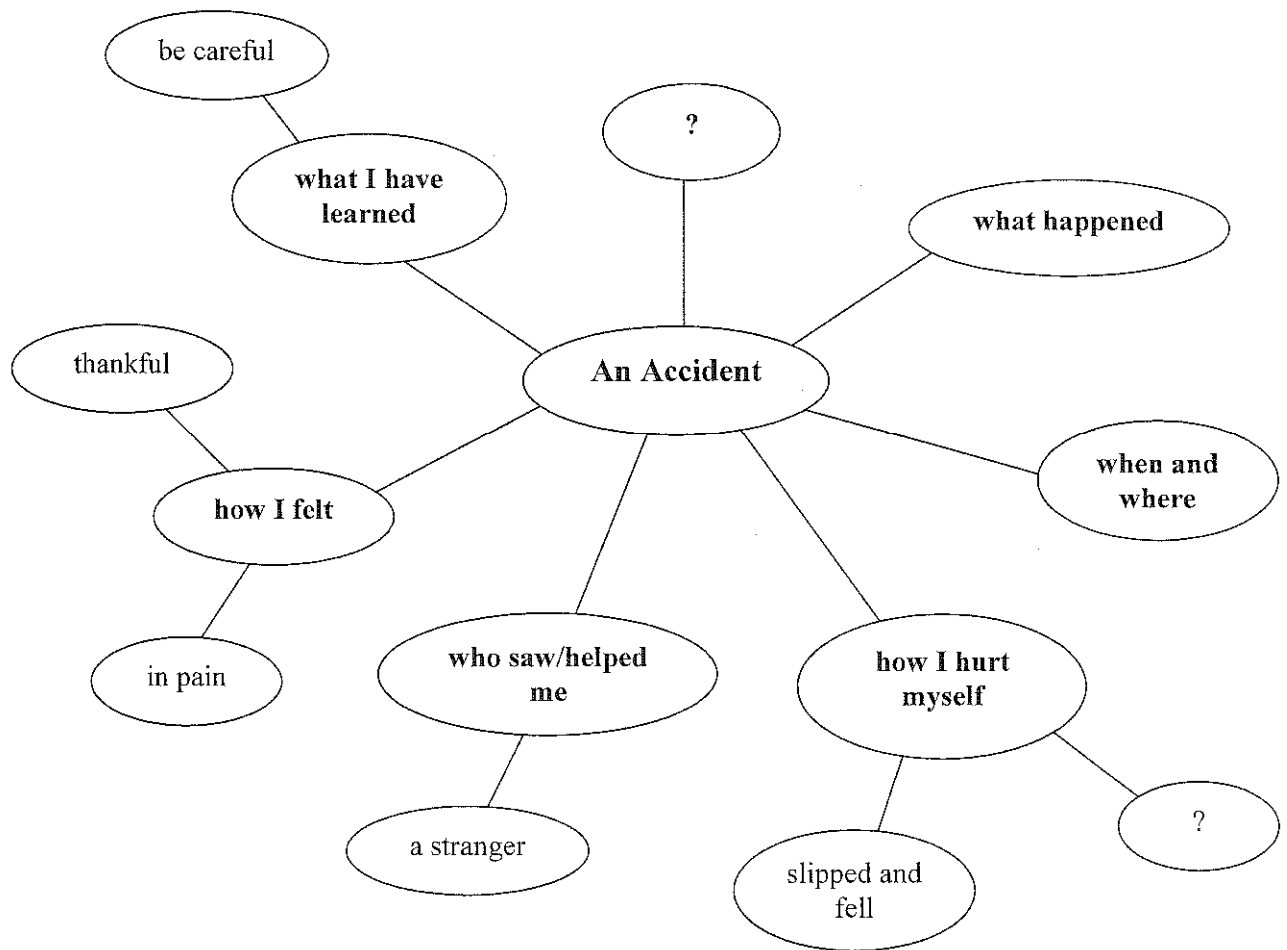
END OF PAPER

An Accident (9EW3)

In this writing task, students were asked to write an account of an accident based on a mind map.

You had an accident and had to stay at home/in hospital for a week. Your teacher has asked you to write about this accident for the class newsletter.

In about 150 words, describe the accident. You may use some of the ideas from the following mind map and/or your own ideas in your writing.



END OF PAPER

Student Exemplars 1 – 6 are written compositions that indicate the minimally acceptable levels of basic competence in writing and the characteristics mentioned previously.

Reply to an Email (9EW1) - Student Exemplar 1

Reply to an Email

From: Robert
To: John@nelligator.com
Sent: Wednesday, June 22, 2011 11:15 AM
Subject: RE: Giving advice

Dear John,

Thank you for your email. I understand why you are so worried about your brother David.

Let me give you some advice.
First, your brother David, he also go to bed very late and ~~don't~~ didn't get enough sleep. maybe he have some question, I think you should talk more with him, or ~~to~~ tell him if you ~~down~~ have enough sleep, you will die.

Second, I know he often use the phone chatting to friends, maybe you can play more with he, don't waste the ~~in~~ time on the phone. Although he doesn't do any exercise and eat junk food after dinner, maybe you can call he with you to go to swim or play ball game, if he eat the junk food, you should ~~the~~ tell him, this is unhealthy and you can make some fruit salad to him.

Finally, I know his results are getting worse and his teacher told your ~~mun~~ mum that his often fall asleep in class, it is because you brother go to bed very late, or you can develop good habits to your brother, like swimming, ~~to~~ football or handballs. ~~at~~ I hope your brother can listen to you.

~~I hope~~ I hope this advice can help you.

~~Robert~~

Yours faithfully

Robert

Annotation

The passage contains simple vocabulary and language patterns. There are errors in grammar – subject/verb agreement – ‘he also go (goes) to bed’, ‘maybe he have (has) some’, pronouns – ‘you can call he (him)’, singular/plural – ‘play ball game(games)’, prepositions – ‘fruit salad to him (fruit salad for him)’ and spelling – ‘your mun (mum)’, although these do not affect meaning to a degree that it is incomprehensible. Some ideas are expressed with details and the paragraphs are developed with supporting details and linkage. The closing is inappropriate for an email to a fellow student.

Weekend Activities (9EW2) - Student Exemplar 2

Weekend Activities

Hello Everyone! Do you have a great time every weekend?
Let me give you some *toips* for you to have a good weekend.
For *plais*, I suggest that all of you can ask your friends
out and play some English Language ^{games}. It can *tain* your language.
Also can be a team player and it is interesting.
For classes, you can join some Club. For example, *Cooking*
Club - Football Club. You can learning new skills. It is
necessary for all of you to learning more things as you will
become more clever.
For voluntary work, you can be a Charity's helper. It
is nice of you to help the people. You will become nice and
happy.
Moreover, you can have news hobbies, likes sing song, dance.
I think that most of you have hobbies, so use your free
times to doing you hobbies, you will not feel dull.
Finally, I suggest all of you must do *excrise* in weekend
as it can make you healthy and we will not overweight.
That is all about my suggest. I hope everyone have a
wonderful weekend.

Annotation

The passage contains only simple ideas with no detailed elaboration of how, when, where or why something would be done – ‘for voluntary work’, ‘be a charity’s helper’, ‘nice of you to help people’, ‘you will become nice and happy’. It also contains errors in grammar – singular/plural – ‘some club (clubs)’ and spelling mistakes – ‘*toips* (*tips*)’, ‘*tain* (*train*)’, ‘*excrise* (*exercise*)’, ‘*all my suggest* (*suggestions*)’, ‘*news hobbies* (*new*)’, although these do not affect meaning to a degree that it is incomprehensible. The writing also contains topic sentences which are prompt dependent – ‘for voluntary work you can...’ The tone is more suited to a speech or presentation, rather than an article.

An Accident (9EW3) - Student Exemplar 3

An Accident

Dear Classmates,

Last Saturday, I visited my Grandpa on Tsuen Wan at 12:00 p.m. At that time the airport not too many.

When I walked every road, I had never seen the car. An accident had occur, While I walk on the road, a car hit on me. I can't run away. At the one moment I can't feeling everything, but after 1 minutes, I saw my leg had many blood and I can't felt my leg had broken. I am very scary at the moment, Many people saw me, some people help me and called to hospital and police.

After that, I sent to the hospital, doctor to help me to check my leg, he said that my leg just broken need to stay at hospital for a week. At that time I am very happy and thank God.

After this accident I had learned when we walking for the every road we need to be careful and need to see the road safe or not safe. Also don't play on the road when there had car.

My classmates don't worried about me I will come back school after a week.

Yours Sincerely,
Tony Wong

Annotation

The passage contains some ideas but these are not expressed with details. No other information is provided about what happens after the accident, the writer just mentions the need to stay in the hospital for a week. Errors in grammar and spelling are made – ‘a car hit on me (a car hit me)’, ‘at the one moment (at that moment)’, ‘when we were walking for the every road (when we walk on any road)’, ‘had many blood (there was a lot of blood)’ that do not affect meaning. The incorrect introduction – ‘Dear Classmates’ and closing – ‘Yours Sincerely, Tony Wong’ indicate a lack of understanding about the tone and format of an article. Though the subject and event may be clear, it is prompt dependent.

Reply to an Email (9EW1) - Student Exemplar 4

Reply to an Email

From: Robert
To: John@nailigator.com
Sent: Wednesday, June 22, 2011 11:15 AM
Subject: RE: Giving advice

Dear John,

Thank you for your email. I understand why you are so worried about your brother David. First, you wrote that your brother goes to bed very late every night so that he doesn't get enough sleep. About that, I think you can make a time table with him so that he can know that he need to go to bed early so that he can have enough sleep and he will not falls asleep in class.

Next, you said that your brother is often on the phone chatting to friends. I think about this problem, you may go to talk with your family and let your family and you go to talk to David more and play some family games with him or talking with him about him school life so that he will not always on the phone and chatting to his friends.

About the next problem, David doesn't exercise and event eats junk food after dinner. I think about exercise, you can join some sport activities with him like swimming. Swimming like a very good sport, you and David can do some exercise and even can have more talking time and you can know him more. About eating junk food after dinner, I think you can talk to your family that they don't buy some many junk food because they are not good for us. After you do that, I think this two problems will be solve.

After that, you said that David's test are geteing worse. I think you are his brother, you can teach him how to do the homework and you can study with him when he has the test also you can make him some exercise so that he can improve that some subject he was don't know. Remember one thing, don't try to not talk to him. If you are not talk to him, he will juct continue to do it so remember don't try to not talks to him.

I hope after you read my letter and get my advice, you can help your brother David to change him life and get a more fun life.

See you soon.

Robert.

Annotation

Ideas in this piece of writing are not expressed effectively – ‘...don't try to not talk to him If you are not talk to him, he will juct continue.’ Expression is hampered by language and little or no use of punctuation – full stop/comma to create starting and end points in

paragraphs. The result is long run-on sentences. Expression is weak – ‘can have more talking time (can have more time to talk)’, ‘he will not always on the phone (he will not always be on the phone)’. Simple spelling mistakes are made – ‘eoungh (enough)’, ‘salve (solved)’, ‘event (even)’, ‘juct (just)’, ‘continue (continue)’. Familiar vocabulary is used based on the information given in the email.

Weekend Activities (9EW2) - Student Exemplar 5

Weekend Activities

Do you feel lonely on weekend? By the way, I'm going to suggest three activities you can do on the weekend. Therefore, you will not waste your time.

First, I suggest do the voluntary work. For example, visit the elderly. Some elderly are lived with no others. It is because these persons don't care with them. Sometimes, they will feel lonely too. Therefore, if you visit them, they will feel very happy. And they will know there are still have people care about them. You also will feel happy after you help them.

Secondly, I suggest you to join the language courses. For example, you can learn Japanese, Korean, French etc. It is good for you to learn new language because you will learn some culture for other countries while you are joining the courses. Also, when you are travelling other countries, you know how to speak the language. Therefore, if you have any problems, you can ask the people.

Last but not least, you may join the cooking club. When you are joining the club, you learn some knowledge about different countries eating habit and culture. Also, you can learn how to cook a delicious food.

In the conclusion, you can't waste the time although you are very young. And join some activities can help you use the time correctly.

Annotation

The passage contains a simple range of vocabulary and language patterns with errors in spelling – ‘thime (time)’, ‘Franch (French)’, grammar and syntax – ‘some elderly are lived (some elderly live)’, ‘when you are joining (when you join)’, ‘you also will feel (you will also feel)’. Definite and indefinite articles are missing – ‘on weekend (on the weekend)’, ‘good for you to learn new language (good for you to learn a new language)’. The content is generally relevant, but it is prompt dependent. Paragraphs contain supporting details and some cohesive devices – ‘Firstly’, ‘Secondly’, ‘Last but not least’, are also used.

An Accident (9EW3) - Student Exemplar 6

An Accident

It was a rainy day and also was an unlucky day for me. Last Sunday, I needed to go to my friend's home to have dinner because of the Christmas party. His home is at the top of a montient. There are not allow any car go on to the montient because there are no road that is suitable to car, so I went there on foot.

It was still sunny and hot when I was at the bottom of the montient. 'It is too hot! If there is some rain, it will be cooler and easily to climb up the montient.' I thought. Suddenly, I hear the sound of the thunder from the sky. I saw the sky turn darker and darker and it started to rain with a strong wind. It rain like the cat and dog and I feel the ground became very soft. I stepped into the ground and I couldn't take out my legs from it. I saw a tree was falling down to me and I was very scare. Suddenly, there was a strong man appear in front of me and the tree was hit the man. I was too scary and I was pass out.

When I woke up I found out I was in the hospital and the man was not here. I was very thankful to him and I have learned to be careful.

Annotation

The passage contains a range of simple vocabulary and language patterns with errors in spelling – 'montient (mountain)' and grammar – adjective use – 'and easily to climb up the montient (and easier to climb up the mountain)', 'scare (scared)', tense – 'hear (heard)'. There are also errors in expression – 'it rain like the cat and dog (it rained cats and dogs)', 'I was too scary and I was pass out (I was scared and I passed out)'. The content is generally relevant, but it is prompt dependent. Paragraphs contain some supporting details.

S.3 Speaking

12 or 24 students (depending on the school size) were randomly selected from each school to participate in the oral assessment. A standard of basic competency in speaking was not set due to the relatively small sample size of students. However, a summary of the overall performance levels of students is given in the section ‘General Comments on S.3 Student Performances’.

Best performance of S.3 Students in TSA 2011

S.3 Listening

Students demonstrated the ability to understand ideas, information, preferences, intentions and attitudes in simple spoken texts. Students could extract specific information, distinguish main ideas from supporting details, connect ideas with contextual clues and understand dialogues which were delivered clearly and in generally familiar accents.

Connecting ideas

- Students were competent in connecting ideas. For example, they were capable of understanding the kinds of programmes that people watched in the past.

(‘Hong Kong’s Past’ - 9EL1 and 9EL2 - Part 2 Q.4)

Students were also capable of identifying the character people could get dressed up as.

(‘News #2’ - 9EL2 - Part 3 Q.4)

Students were also able to determine what one person did to keep fit.

(‘Staying Healthy’ - 9EL3 - Part 3 Q.2)

Contextual Clues

- Students were capable of identifying various contextual clues in conversations. For example, they were able to work out where the client wanted to go and also whether the family would have to transfer airlines.

(‘Travel Plan’ - 9EL2 and 9EL3 - Part 1 Q.1 and Q.11)

Specific Information

- The majority of students were able to listen for specific information and provide the name of the vehicle rental company name and also the reservation number.

(‘Travel Plan’ - 9EL2 and 9EL3 - Part 1 Q.13 and Q.14)

Students were also able to determine what one particular person did to keep fit.

(‘Staying Healthy’ - 9EL3 - Part 3 Q.3)

Unfamiliar words

- Students were generally capable of determining the meaning of an unfamiliar word. For example, about half of the students were able to work out the meaning of the word ‘selfless’ using only the context provided.

(‘Poem - Mother’ - 9EL1 - Part 3 Q.2)

Main Idea

- Students were generally capable of determining the main idea. For example, the majority of students were able to determine what was most important to a speaker who talked about how he kept fit.

(‘Staying Healthy’ - 9EL3 - Part 3 Q.1)

S.3 Reading

Students generally used a wider range of reading strategies to understand the meaning of texts with some degree of complexity. They demonstrated some ability to use some strategies to determine the meaning of texts written on familiar and unfamiliar topics and for various purposes, contexts and audiences. They could extract or locate specific information from different text-types such as the classified section, movie reviews and a pamphlet. Students were also capable of using inference skills in certain passages with familiar topics.

Specific Information

- Most students could extract specific information in various reading passages. For example, from two movie reviews, the majority of students could identify the main characters of the film. (‘Movies’ - 9ER1, 9ER2, 9ER3 - Part 3 Q.2 and 3)

From the pamphlet many students were able to identify where they would find waterfowl. (‘Green Wetland Park’ – 9ER3 – Part 2 Q.4)

Contextual Clues

- Students could identify various contextual clues in passages. For example, in a pamphlet, students answered correctly that they should tell the park workers if there were dead birds. (‘Hong Kong Wetland’ - 9ER3 - Part 2 Q.8)

Different Views and Attitudes

- Students were able to interpret different views and attitudes as presented in written texts by authors. For instance, students were able to respond correctly about the attitudes of the authors regarding the plot, special effects and the music.

(‘Movies’ - 9ER1, 9ER2 and 9ER3 - Part 3 Q.7, 8 and 10)

Distinguishing Fact from Opinion

- Students could extract information from the texts to distinguish that Sam living with his mother was a fact, not an opinion.
(‘Movies’ - 9ER1, 9ER2 and 9ER3 - Part 3 Q.16)

Genre

- Many students were capable of identifying the correct genre. For example, what they had read would be found in a newspaper.
(‘Police Use Facebook’ - 9ER2 - Q.7)
Many students were also able to determine that the passages were reviews.
(‘Movies’ - 9ER1, 9ER2, 9ER3 - Part 3 Q.14)

Main Idea

- A considerable number of students were capable of determining the main idea. For example, students were able to determine the plot by reading the reviews.
(‘Movies’ - 9ER1, 9ER2, 9ER3 - Part 3 Q.4)
Quite a number of students were able to work out what visitors were able to learn when they visited the Green Wetland Park.
(‘Hong Kong Wetland’ - 9ER3 - Part 2 Q.2)

Inference

- Students could comprehend implied information. For example when reading the pamphlet about the wetland park many students were able to infer where they could buy gifts.
(‘Green Wetland Park’ - 9ER3 - Part 2 Q.3)

Unfamiliar Expression

- Students were capable of determining the meaning of an unfamiliar expression. For example, when reading the pamphlet about the wetland park a considerable number of students were able to work out that to avoid contact with birds meant no touching.
(‘Green Wetland Park’ - 9ER3 - Part 2 Q.7)

S.3 Writing

Most students with good performance in writing demonstrated competence in writing with an attempt to communicate relevant ideas, information, opinions and feelings appropriate to the context and purpose.

Student Exemplars 7 – 12 are written passages that have the following characteristics:

- relevant content and ideas expressed effectively
- adequate overall planning and organization
- paragraphs developed with supporting details
- coherent links within and between paragraphs
- wider range of vocabulary and language patterns used appropriately
- few grammatical, spelling, capitalisation and punctuation mistakes
- features used correctly with few tense shifts and a better focus on the subject and event
- clear understanding of the audience and format as well as context and purpose

Reply to an Email (9EW1) - Student Exemplar 7

Reply to an Email

From: Robert
To: John@nelligator.com
Sent: Wednesday, June 22, 2011 11:15 AM
Subject: RE: Giving advice

Dear John,

Thank you for your email. I understand why you are so worried about your brother David. Nowadays, many teenagers go to bed very late. They love surfing the Internet and chat with friends on Facebook and MSN. It may waste a lot of time and cause short sighted. To solve this problem, you can try to reduce time that he uses the computer by having a timer. It can control the time he uses computer.

Second, you've mentioned that your brother often on the phone chatting to friends. I think you can ask about his purpose of using the phone before you ^{get} angry with him. However, if he uses it ^{only} for fun and ~~only~~ talking to his friends with no reasons, you should stop him and talk to him that it may waste his time on studying, a short time talking with friends is alright but he should control himself carefully.

Thirdly, David doesn't exercise and even eats junk food after dinner. It will be a bad living habit. It will make him be obese and unhealthy. To solve this problem, you can have a time table with him by settling which days he needs to do exercise. You can do it with him to make this more fun and enjoyable. It will slowly become a good habit. Also, according to the problem of eating junk food after dinner, you can suggest him to eat fruit but not junk food by increasing it at home. Fruits can provide him with vitamin and dietary fibre to make him healthier.

Falls asleep in class is an absolutely bad habit. It must easily influence his test results. If you ^{have} tried to talk to him and he doesn't improve it, you can emphasise the bad effects of not enough sleep and encourage him by giving him some gifts when he's got good results in the examination. You can also ~~buy~~ buy some suitable exercise books for him to ~~practise~~ practise.

I hope all these may help you and your brother David.

Robert.

Annotation

An organized piece of writing with some minor errors in spelling – 'amphasise (emphasise)', use of vocabulary 'also according to the problem of eating junk food (With regards to the problem of eating junk food)', grammar and syntax – 'Falls asleep in class

(Falling), *make him be obese (make him become obese)*'. Some ideas are not expressed clearly, but paragraphs are developed with supporting details, where the problem is mentioned and a solution suggested. A wide range of vocabulary and sentence patterns are used – for example – *'fruits can provide him with vitamin (vitamins) and dietary fibre to make him healthier'*. There are also coherent links within and between paragraphs and some cohesive devices – *'second', 'thirdly'*, are also used.

Weekend Activities (9EW2) - Student Exemplar 8

Weekend Activities

Nowadays, students usually play computer games at home, or doing nothing during the weekend. However, have you ever thought of doing some other things to enrich yourself?

Actually, there are a lot to do, like going outdoors, hiking, etc. I'm going to introduce some ideas for the weekend activities.

First, doing volunteer work. Many agencies in Hong Kong organize work and activities for people who are willing to help during the weekend. Like flag-selling, visiting elderlies, are very common volunteer works. Also, cleaning beaches is also very meaningful because it is a way to protect our environment.

Second, we can develop new hobbies, like playing ball games, collecting stamps and cards. These are very healthy activities and it also help us to communicate with friends and families.

Moreover, we can have fun with our parents at home by playing card games or have some cooking. Besides communicating, we can also learn new skills.

What's more? We can also draw some pictures. Draw pictures can show your personality and others can know more about what you are thinking. It is also a way for you to express yourself in art.

To conclude, there are a lot of ways to spend our weekend, but, how will you choose?

Annotation

Paragraphs are well organized with supporting details and there are only a few errors in grammar – *'do nothing (doing nothing)'* *'have some cooking (do some cooking)'*, syntax, tense shifts and vocabulary – *'visiting elderlies (visiting the elderly)'*, *'but how will you choose (but what will you choose)'*. Ideas are expressed and supported with reasons. There are coherent links within paragraphs and some cohesive devices – *'First', 'Second'*, are also used.

An Accident (9EW3) - Student Exemplar 9

An Accident

My head was hurt a week ago. Although it's not as painful as before now, I still feel scared of what had happened.

That day, I went to bed as usual at night. However, as all of you know, I was still quite energetic at night. My dad was brushing his teeth in the bathroom. Therefore, I came up with an idea.

'Hey! My little sister, let's play a fun game!' I suggested.

'What game?' My sister asked with a sigh.

'Can you jump from that chair to another chair near the wall?' I asked.

'No, I think I can't! The two chairs are very far apart from each other,' she scared.

'You're so timid. Here's my show!' I said bravely.

I jumped excitedly and showed my sister how well I had done.

'See? It's so easy! Let's try together!' I encouraged.

My sister gave a try after I showed her how to jump and then, it was my turn to jump again.

At that time, I was 'over-excited'. When I jumped towards the chair near the wall, I couldn't look at the road clearly and I finally failed to step on the chair and fell. My head hit at the wall and I was in serious pain.

I pretended nothing happened and said, 'Oh! It's just a little problem and I am not very painful.'

My dad heard the sound 'Bang' when I hurt my head and came over to see what had happened.

'Are you really OK? Your head is bleeding!!' he scared.

I put my hand against my head and I screamed, 'Ah! It's bleed!'

My sister told my dad what happened and he quickly sent me to hospital. Luckily, the doctor told me that it wasn't a serious hurt to my head and I felt thankful to God.

'I am lucky all the time!' I said with laughter.

'If you keep on playing dangerous games without considering the result, I'm sure you'll get a serious hurt in the near future,' dad told with anger.

I felt ashamed after my dad scolded me and I thought I really need to consider the result before doing something.

Annotation

The ideas are related to the topic with details. The amount of dialogue does not detract from the story, only from the format. The story requires tense shifts between the dialogue and story. A range of vocabulary is used – 'my dad scolded me', and the language patterns are mixed – 'wasn't a serious hurt to my head (my head wasn't seriously hurt/injured)', 'I couldn't look at the road clearly (I couldn't see the way clearly)', 'came over (came to see)'. There are also some minor spelling mistakes – 'energytic (energetic)'.

Reply to an Email (9EW1) - Student Exemplar 10

Reply to an Email

From: Robert
To: John@neligator.com
Sent: Wednesday, June 22, 2011 11:15 AM
Subject: RE: Giving advice

Dear John,

Thank you for your email. I understand why you are so worried about your brother David. The habits he has greatly affected his health and study. It's good that you have tried to talk to him but maybe you need some other methods to communicate^{well} with him. David is in teenage period. Teenagers hate punishments and don't like people stopping them to do what they like. It's normal that he doesn't listen. Firstly, I think David spends too much time on the phone chatting to friends, to you. You can tell David chatting^{too much} on the phone easily causes cancer because of radiation. Let him know the disadvantages and you're^{he'll know} caring about him. Also, set up a timetable with him to reduce going^{to} bed late. If he had enough sleep, falling asleep in class could be improved. the problem of

Second, David will get obesity if he continues to eat junk food after dinner without exercising. I think your parents should put more fruits or cereals at home instead of junk food. When there's no junk food at home, he doesn't eat them. Also, help David to maintain a balance diet. For example, only allows him to eat junk food twice a week and cook more vegetables in every meal.

Lastly, it's sad to know his test results^{are} getting worse. I think you should set some goals for him. If he doesn't reach the goal, some punishments will be given. For example, you want him to improve his test results five marks and he likes playing football. If he doesn't reach it, he may not play football oftenly. Giving him encouragement is very important. Tell him not to give up easily, be patient and believe himself. so

Hope these advices help. If you still have any problem, feel free to write to me. I'll try my best to help you.

Robert

Annotation

The content is well developed with cause and effect demonstrated and explained and with solutions provided – *if he eats junk food he will get fat → put more fruit on the table.*

There are some minor grammatical and vocabulary problems – ‘*will get obesity (will become obese)*’, ‘*be patient and believe himself (be patient and believe in himself)*’, ‘*hope these advices help (hope this advice helps)*’. There are coherent links between and also within the paragraphs. There is a good introduction as well as a good ending.

Weekend Activities (9EW2) - Student Exemplar 11

Weekend Activities

There are different types of activities ^{that} we can join at weekend. For me, most likely I will hang out with my friends or go to library. Usually I will go to Causeway Bay and Mong Kok with my friends if I need to buy something. In fact, I like going to library more than go shopping because I can read different types of books in library. Then, how will you make good use of your time at weekend?

I suggest students joining some voluntary works. This is one of the meaningful event. For example, some organisations will organise a group of volunteer and do some services such as cleaning beaches and flag selling day. Cleaning beaches can let the students care for the environment and let them know a comfortable and clean environment is very important for us. If people destroy the environment, some negative effects will affect human. Flag selling day is also a common event. Students can collect donations through selling the flags. The money will be helped the people in need. Moreover, if we join the voluntary work, we can make more friends and help the others. So, joining these work is very meaningful.

If students don't like joining the voluntary work, they can join some courses or classes. For example, girls like cooking so they can join some cooking classes. They can learn new cooking skill and methods and they will cook some delicious dishes. If they have learned these skills, they can cook dishes by themselves at home. Also, if students like languages, they can join some courses that learn some foreign languages like German and Japanese. Students can learn and understand the culture through learning the languages. ~~Also~~, If they have learned some foreign languages, they can use them to speak to the local people so they will not afraid of the local people misunderstand their sentences.

Besides these event, I think most of students have their own hobbies such as listening to the music and reading. For me, I like reading very much so I always borrow books from library. Some people like doing sports and it is also a good choice. Doing regular exercise is essential for us and it can keep our body healthy. There are many types sports that we can choose so we can choose some sports ~~#~~ we like.

In conclusion, we have a lots ways to make good use of time. We shouldn't waste the ~~the~~ time at weekend. Instead, we can choose some meaniful events to do so we can keep on learning skills and knowledge that text books don't have.

Annotation

The paragraphs are developed with supporting details, and the ideas are expressed effectively. A wide range of vocabulary is used. There are only minor errors in spelling – ‘joining (joining)’ and grammar – ‘many types sports (many types of sports)’ and syntax – ‘so they will not afraid (so they will not be afraid)’. The prompts have been used to provide the framework of the piece, but the added information and personal details indicate the ability to express ideas effectively as well as to provide reasons.

An Accident (9EW3) - Student Exemplar 12

An Accident

△ In 16th June, I went to Tai Wai with my friends. We cycled from Tai Wai to Tai Po, and then went back to Tai Wai.

△ I am a beginner of cycling so we chose an easy trail to ride on. When we arrived Tai Wai, it suddenly rained. We did not want to call off the activity. Therefore, we still cycled in rain.

△ I was very careful and slow at first. However, I cycled quicker and quicker. I enjoyed the excitement. My friends kept reminding to slow down. I have slowed down for a short while but became quickly unconscious.

We were about to ride down a steep slope. My friends told me to walk down the slope instead of riding down. I did not listen to them, and even speeded up. I was thrilled and ^{said} they were chicken-hearted. Nearly the end of the slope, there was a sudden curve. I was not able to react and I crashed on the hedges hard. I was quite seriously injured. My hands, arms, feet were bleeding.

My friends immediately came down and helped me to sterilized the injuries. I was in pain and I grasped my friend's arm tightly. They stuck the bandages on my injuries and asked me to try to walk. When I stood up, my knees were in pain. I could neither walk nor cycle.

As my bicycle was seriously damaged, we decided to throw it away and compensated the lost to the bicycle rental shop.

I sat on the back of their bicycles. They relayed to bring me back to Tai Wai. I knew they were tired, extremely tired, but they were still willing to carry me back to the city. I was pleased and thankful to have such good friends.

△ After went back to the city, they called a taxi and brought me to the hospital. After checking, the doctor said my knees were seriously injured and the bones have broken. He suggested me to stay at hospital for a week to have further checking and to receive further medical treatment. Now, I was staying in hospital. I am alright. I think I will be able to go back school next Monday. Thank you for all your cards and messages.

After the accident, I learned to be careful, beware of the weather. Also, I should listen to others' advices. If I had listened to my friend's warning, I would not have been injured. Moreover, I knew I had many good friend undoubtedly. They will help me always. I must cherish the days together and our lifelong friendship! Thank you, my friends! Thank you! Miss Lam!

Annotation

The content is well developed and relevant but there are some errors in spelling – ‘stuck the bedges on (stuck the bandages on)’, ‘injured (injured)’. There are coherent links within and between the paragraphs. There is a clear opening, the story has a climax and the resolution and closing are evident.

S.3 Speaking

Individual Presentations

Students with good speaking skills were competent in the following four areas: 'ideas and organisation', 'vocabulary and language patterns', 'pronunciation and delivery' and 'strategies for oral communication'.

- Students expressed ideas, information and opinions that were relevant and reasonably clear with supporting details.
- Students were capable of using appropriate language patterns and vocabulary. They could speak clearly and fluently with few errors in pronunciation and could use a wider range of delivery techniques. They showed an awareness of their audience, maintaining good eye contact with the oral assessors.

Group Interactions

Students with good speaking skills were competent in conveying ideas intelligibly as well as using simple strategies for effective oral communication.

- Students could respond to relevant ideas with supporting details provided. They demonstrated a good range of vocabulary and were reasonably clear in expressing opinions. Pronunciation of familiar and unfamiliar words was generally clear and accurate.
- Students could use various strategies for oral communication. Many capable students could maintain interactions through a range of communicative strategies, such as posing questions to elicit opinions from other group members, encouraging others to elaborate further and consolidating the group's ideas.

General Comments on S.3 Student Performances

S.3 Listening

- Students at the Basic Competency level performed well with extracting specific information from spoken texts. They could understand short conversations supported by context, careful or slowed speech, repetitions or rephrasing. They could distinguish most common word-order patterns but had difficulty with tense shifts and more complex sentence structures.
- Most students understood simple texts with familiar topics and could identify opinions when they were clearly signalled. Generally students could work out the meaning of unfamiliar words when a simple and familiar context was given.
- Students generally did well on written answers though spelling mistakes made them difficult to comprehend at times.
- Students found it difficult to distinguish a speaker's feelings from the tone of his/her voice.
- Some students also found it difficult to distinguish between a range of consonant and vowel sounds, confusing numbers and letters.

S.3 Reading

- Most students were capable of locating specific information from different text types.
- Many students were capable of relating facts and information in various texts using reference skills.
- Some students were not able to identify examples of rhyme in a poem.
- Some students could interpret the meaning of unfamiliar words and expressions with contextual clues. They could also infer meaning from context.

S.3 Writing

- Students writing well-organised paragraphs and providing additional details for their ideas scored 3 and 4 for Content and Language.
- Students scoring 2 or 1 for Content and Language tended to provide few ideas and generally based their writing on the prompts.
- Off-topic writing passages were awarded 0 for Content and Features and did not score more than a 2 for Organisation and Language.
- Using a wider range of vocabulary with fewer grammatical errors, capable students could provide more supporting details to their main ideas in their writing. (Student exemplar #7- Reply to an Email)
- Although students could write well-organised paragraphs, few could elaborate on the topic and generally based their comments on the prompts. (Student exemplar #3 – An Accident) Students with better writing skills could develop well-organised paragraphs and could, for instance, even make suggestions and explain why activities would be beneficial to students. (Student exemplar #11 – Weekend Activities)
- On a familiar topic about problems faced by a student and how to solve them, students generally used simple language patterns and their ideas lacked supporting details. Although errors in spelling and grammar were evident, comprehension was not hindered. (Student exemplar #4 – Reply to an Email)
- Capable students wrote better organized passages and could elaborate their ideas giving valid reasons for participating in various weekend activities. (Student exemplar #11 – Weekend Activities)
- Students, in many instances, misspelled common words and it was evident that proofreading was not being done. It was also evident that some students are hindered by their inability to spell simple vocabulary.

S.3 Speaking

- When presenting, most students generally spoke clearly, with some fluidity of expression, though difficulties with pronunciation, intonation, or pacing were noticeable. Some students could not express themselves clearly and the relationship between their ideas was not immediately clear, though overall intelligibility was not significantly affected.
- Most students could respond to a speaking task appropriately, but fell short of fully elaborating on a given topic. They were generally intelligible and coherent, with some fluidity of expression, though noticeable lapses in the expression of ideas were evident.
- Although many students spoke with an imprecise or inaccurate use of vocabulary or grammatical structures, or a limited range of structures, it did not interfere with the communication of the message.
- Some students hesitated occasionally and used fillers such as ‘ah’ and ‘hmm’ in their presentations. Others hesitated to the extent that their speech was stilted and difficult for listeners to comprehend, or simply did not speak at all.
- Although many students simply read their presentation, others made attempts to display an awareness of their audience using appropriate eye contact with the oral assessors.
- In ‘Group Interactions’, students’ responses were generally brief and they seldom elaborated on their own ideas or provided further details in their discussions. Some students had difficulty in interacting and resorted to reading out their scripts.
- In ‘Group Interactions’, students’ turn-taking skills needed to be improved and students would need to learn to respond to what is said by others instead of just providing feedback or a response without appropriate clarification and explanation.
- Students used only limited interaction strategies when responding to others, for example, ‘I agree’, ‘That’s a good idea!’ or ‘Do you have any idea?’
- In some cases, students were extremely self-conscious about their oral communication skills. They did not actively participate in the interaction or were extremely hesitant when speaking, in some cases because they were unfamiliar with the vocabulary and its pronunciation, for example, ‘Valentine’s Day’, ‘unforgettable’, ‘environment’.

Comparison of Student Performances in English Language at Secondary 3 TSA 2009, 2010 and 2011

The percentage of S.3 students achieving Basic Competency in 2011 was 69.2, the same as the percentage for the year 2010 which was 69.2% as shown in Table 7.29.

Table 7.29 Percentages of S.3 Students Achieving English Language Basic Competency in 2009, 2010 and 2011

Year	% of Students Achieving English Language Basic Competency
2009	68.8
2010	69.2
2011	69.2

A comparison of the strengths and weaknesses of S.3 student performances in TSA 2009, 2010 and 2011 provides useful information on how teachers can help students improve their skills. Table 7.30 summarises such a comparison.

Table 7.30 Comparison of Student Performances in English Language at Secondary 3 TSA 2009, 2010 and 2011

<div>Year</div> <div>Skill</div>	2009	2010	2011
Reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students could generally use strategies to determine the meaning of texts written on familiar topics and for various purposes and contexts. Some students were capable of distinguishing views and attitudes and could understand the meaning of texts with some degree of complexity. Some students were able to comprehend and make plausible conclusions of the meaning of unfamiliar words and expressions using reference skills. Many were also adept at inference. Some students could understand language features and correctly identify an example of alliteration. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A high percentage of students could generally use strategies to determine the meaning of texts written on familiar topics and could identify general and specific information. A moderate number of students were capable of distinguishing views and attitudes through contextual clues. Students also showed some ability to analyze and integrate relevant points from one or more texts. A moderate number of students were able to comprehend and make plausible conclusions of the meaning of unfamiliar words and expressions using reference skills. They were also adept at inference and could also identify main ideas. Many more students could understand language features such as onomatopoeia, alliteration, personification and rhyming words presented in simple imaginative texts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A high percentage of students could generally use strategies to determine the meaning of texts written on familiar topics and could identify general and specific information. Many students were capable of distinguishing views and attitudes through contextual clues. Quite a number of students were able to distinguish fact from opinion Quite a number of students were able to comprehend and make plausible conclusions of the meaning of unfamiliar expressions using reference skills. More than half of the students were also adept at inference and could also identify main ideas. Only a small number of students could understand language features and correctly identify an example of alliteration and rhyme

Year Skill	2009	2010	2011
Writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students could generally communicate ideas, information and opinions appropriate to the context and purpose in writing. In general, students could provide reasons and elaborate on familiar topics in writing short, descriptive passages. Students in most cases were able to provide details to support main ideas. Many students could use simple sentences with connectives, such as ‘first’, ‘second’ and ‘finally’ in writing paragraphs. Paragraphs were generally well-organised with coherent links. Many students were unable to use the correct tenses, in particular the simple past, which made it difficult for readers to comprehend their writing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In general, a high percentage of students could communicate ideas, information and opinions appropriate to the context and purpose in writing. However, only a moderate number of students could provide reasons and elaborate on familiar topics such as school or school subjects. A high percentage of students improved in the use of paragraph writing and were capable of writing well organized passages. Many more students could use connectives although the writing lacked cohesive links between paragraphs. A moderate number of students made errors when using tenses invariably confusing the past and future tenses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In general, students could communicate ideas, information and opinions appropriate to the context and purpose in writing However, only a moderate number of students could provide reasons and elaborate on familiar topics such as school life and student behaviour. Students in most cases were able to provide some details to support main ideas. Although many students could write well-organised paragraphs, topic elaboration was limited and comments were based primarily on the prompts.. Many students could use simple sentences with connectives, such as ‘first’, ‘second’ and ‘finally’ in writing paragraphs. Paragraphs were generally well-organised with coherent links. A moderate number of students made errors when using tenses, in particular when recounting an event that had taken place. A lack of topic specific vocabulary hindered some students who were not able to express their ideas logically or fluently and they relied predominantly on prompts provided.

Year Skill	2009	2010	2011
Listening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most students were competent in understanding ideas, information, opinions and feelings in simple, clear and slowly spoken texts. • Students could extract relevant ideas and information from spoken tests on familiar topics. • Capable students were adept at inference and could interpret and evaluate information not explicit in a dialogue. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A high percentage of students could extract specific information from simple, clear and slower spoken texts. They were also competent in understanding ideas, opinions and feelings in spoken texts. • No items on sequencing in the current assessments. • A moderate number of students were adept at connecting ideas and could interpret and evaluate information in dialogues. • A moderate number of students could distinguish main ideas from supporting details in simple narrative dialogues spoken slowly. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many students could extract specific information from simple, clear and slower spoken texts. • About half of students were able to discriminate between a range of vowel and consonant sounds. • More than half of the students were adept at connecting ideas. A considerable number of students could interpret and evaluate information in dialogues using contextual clues. • Some students could distinguish main ideas from supporting details in simple narrative dialogues spoken slowly.

Year Skill	2009	2010	2011
Speaking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students were capable of expressing ideas and information which were comprehensible although a number of pronunciation and language errors impeded understanding at times. Many students generally expressed adequate ideas when prompted during 'Individual Presentation' and delivered their presentations using simple language patterns and vocabulary. Some students hesitated frequently when presenting which made it difficult for oral assessors to understand. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A moderate number of students were capable of expressing comprehensible ideas and information although, at times, pronunciation and language errors impeded comprehension. A high percentage of students expressed adequate ideas, generally when prompted, during 'Individual Presentation' and delivered presentations using simple language patterns and vocabulary. A moderate number of students hesitated frequently and stuttered hampering the delivery of their presentation. Some would struggle as they lacked the vocabulary to express themselves clearly. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students were capable of expressing comprehensible ideas and information with almost half of the students able to use simple language patterns and familiar vocabulary appropriately. Many students generally expressed adequate ideas when prompted during 'Individual Presentation' and delivered their presentations using simple language patterns and vocabulary. Some struggled as they lacked the vocabulary to express themselves clearly and also had difficulty pronouncing key vocabulary.

Year Skill	2009	2010	2011
Speaking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In many cases, students simply read their presentations though some would occasionally make brief eye contact with the assessors. • In 'Group Interaction' students responded to each other with simple, short responses although, at times, they attempted to add details in their responses. • During 'Group Interaction', students usually responded to each other using limited interaction strategies, for example, 'That's okay' or 'I agree' or 'Do you have any idea?' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many more students made eye contact with their assessors and did not simply read from scripts. • In 'Group Interaction' students responded to each other with simple, short responses. Some students attempted to add further details when responding. • During 'Group Interaction', students usually responded to each other using formulaic expressions, or limited interaction strategies, for example, 'How about you' or 'Yes, I agree' or 'What do you think?' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In many cases, students simply read their presentations though many more students made eye contact with their assessors and did not simply read from scripts • In 'Group Interaction' students responded to each other with simple, short, relevant responses and some attempted to add further details when responding. • During 'Group Interaction', almost half of the students responded to each other using limited interaction strategies, for example, 'That's okay' or 'I agree' or 'Do you have any idea?'

Comparison of Student Performances in English Language at Primary 3, Primary 6 and Secondary 3 TSA 2011

This was the sixth year that Secondary 3 students participated in the Territory-wide System Assessment at the end of Key Stage 3. The percentage of S.3 students achieving Basic Competency in 2011 was the same as the percentage for the year 2010 as shown in table 7.31.

Table 7.31 Percentage of Students Achieving English Language Basic Competency

<div> <div>Year</div> <div>Class Level</div> </div>	% of Students Achieving English Language Basic Competency							
	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
P.3	75.9	78.8	79.4	79.5	79.3	#	79.2	79.8
P.6	--	70.5	71.3	71.3	71.5	#	71.6	71.7
S.3	--	--	68.6	69.2	68.9	68.8	69.2	69.2

Due to Human Swine Influenza causing the suspension of primary schools, the TSA was cancelled and no data has been provided.

Table 7.32 Comparison of Student Performances in English Language at Primary 3, Primary 6 and Secondary 3 TSA 2011

Level Skill	P.3	P.6	S.3
Reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students were capable of identifying key words related to date, time, places and amount of money with the help of straightforward contextual clues and pictorial cues. Students were able to work out the connection between ideas linked up by 'and'. Students were able to obtain information from a contents page and a dictionary cover. Some students could predict the meaning of unfamiliar words by using more than one contextual clue. When given contextual clues in the contents page, many students were able to deduce the contents of different chapters in the book. Students were able to interpret a reference word which was close to the subject to which it referred. They could also follow pronoun references in a letter. 	<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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A high percentage of students could generally analyse information from different text types and determine meaning for various purposes and contexts. A moderate number of students were capable of connecting ideas to infer points of view in simple imaginative texts. Capable students were able to comprehend and make a plausible conclusion of the meaning of unfamiliar words and expressions using reference skills and contextual clues. Capable students could respond to ideas, themes, characters and feelings presented in simple literary texts. Their relevant responses showed they had some ability to understand the use of language features like alliteration and rhyme.

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Writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For the writing task 'At the Farm', students were generally able to write a factual account of the visit to Happy Farm with an ending, though not many supporting details were given. A small number of students could write interesting or imaginative stories. For the writing task 'Things I Do at Weekends', students could write about what they usually do at weekends with given prompts. Students misspelled common words, e.g. 'gril' for 'girl', 'drick' for 'duck', 'mather' for 'mother', 'chicken' for 'children', 'becuse' for 'because', 'thing' for 'think', 'brind' for 'bring', etc. Students had difficulty with verb forms, e.g. 'I goes to Happy Farm.', 'There have corn...', 'Tom read with me...', 'I feel is happy.' Some students were able to use cohesive devices such as 'and', 'then', 'at last', 'because' in their writing. Capable students were able to provide relevant ideas with details. They could also use a range of vocabulary, sentence patterns and cohesive devices appropriately. 	<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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In general, capable students could provide reasons and elaborate on familiar topics. They were competent in using correct formats in writing short, descriptive passages. A moderate number of students could provide details to support main ideas. Given mind maps, students could provide relevant ideas and write a coherent and well organised passage. Many students could use simple sentences with connectives, such as 'first', 'second' and 'finally' in their writing passages. Paragraph development was evident in most passages of writing but lacked coherent links. A moderate number of students were unable to use appropriate tenses, in particular the simple past. Their sentences contained inappropriate shifts in tenses. Students used a limited range of vocabulary with simple language patterns that would, at times, affect meaning.

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Listening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • P.3 students were generally able to identify key words on familiar topics such as means of transport, duration, places, food, games and days. • Most students were able to distinguish initial consonants ‘S’, ‘J’ and ‘C’. • Most students showed understanding of a speaker’s tone of voice (e.g. happy, sad and excited). • Most students were able to distinguish ‘95’ and ‘55’. • Most students were able to understand the connection between ideas by identifying cohesive devices ‘and’ and ‘or’. 	<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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capable students were competent in discriminating between intonation for a range of purposes. • No items on sequencing in the assessment. • A high percentage of students were capable of understanding the meaning of simple dialogues on familiar and less familiar topics. Many were capable of distinguishing main ideas from supporting details and listening for gist. • Capable students were adept at understanding the connection between ideas and could infer meaning.

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Speaking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For 'Reading Aloud', more than half of the students read the text quite clearly though some mistakes in pronunciation were evident. Students with the best performance were able to read fluently and clearly with appropriate pausing and intonation. For 'Expression of Personal Experiences', most of the students were able to provide brief answers to the questions. Questions which elicited factual answers were generally more manageable than questions asking for reasons. In 'Picture Description', more than half of the students were capable of giving appropriate responses to the questions related to the pictures given. They could respond more naturally to familiar topics such as <i>A Birthday Gift</i> and <i>A School Picnic</i>. 	<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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When presenting, most students generally spoke clearly, with some fluidity of expression, though difficulties with pronunciation, intonation, or pacing were noticeable. At times assessors found it difficult to comprehend a student's presentation as relationships between ideas were not immediately clear, though overall intelligibility was not significantly affected. Most students could respond to a speaking task appropriately, but fell short of elaborating on a given topic. When presenting, students were generally intelligible and coherent, with some fluidity of expression, though noticeable lapses in the expression of ideas were evident. Many students demonstrated a fairly effective use of grammar and vocabulary with coherent expressions of relevant ideas. Some students, however, presented with an imprecise or inaccurate use of vocabulary and grammatical structures, though it did not interfere with the communication of the message. In 'Group Interaction' students generally interacted with each other with simple, short responses and seldom elaborated or further extended their ideas when discussing their assigned topic.