

Results of Secondary 3 English Language in TSA 2012

The Territory-wide percentage of students achieving the S.3 English Language Basic Competency in TSA 2012 is 69.1%. The percentage of students achieving Basic Competency in 2012 is similar to that of 2011.

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 120 items and 129 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 7.11.

Table 7.11 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 L5-L-2-S3BC (listening strategies) L5-L-1-S3BC (language features)	9EL1	9EL2	9EL3	L5-S-3-S3BC (ideas)	9ESP1 – 9ESP8 Individual Presentation	9ESG1 – 9ESG8 Group Interaction
	25 (25)	23 (23)	26 (26)		8 (4)	8 (4)
Reading L6-R-1-S3BC (reading strategies) L5-R-3-S3BC (language features) L5-R-4-S3BC (reference skills)	2 (2)	3 (3)	2 (2)	L6-S-6-S3BC (organisation)	8 (4)	0
	9ER1	9ER2	9ER3	L5-S-4-S3BC (vocabulary & language patterns)	8 (4)	0
	32 (32)	33 (33)	34 (34)	L5-S-2-S3BC (pronunciation & delivery)	8 (4)	0
	1 (1)	1 (1)	0 (0)	L6-S-5-S3BC (strategies for oral communication)	8 (2)	8 (2)
Writing L6-W-1-S3BC (content) L6-W-2-S3BC (language) L6-W-3-S3BC (organisation) L5-W-5-S3BC (features)	2 (2)	2 (2)	1 (1)			
	9EW1	9EW2	9EW3			
	1 (4)	1 (4)	1 (4)			
	1 (4)	1 (4)	1 (4)			

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 7.12 and 7.13.

Table 7.12 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	4
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	48
TOTAL		52

Table 7.13 S.3 Listening: Item Description and Question Types

Basic Competency	Item Description	Question Type	No. of Items (Score Points)
L5-L-2-S3BC	Interview - <i>So You Want to be an Exchange Student?</i> - <i>Sven and Maria</i> 9EL1 - Part 1	Multiple choice	13 (13)
L5-L-2-S3BC	Interview - <i>Author Sheila Boxer</i> 9EL1 - Part 2 9EL3 - Part 2	Multiple choice	8 (8)
L5-L-2-S3BC L5-L-1-S3BC	Interview - <i>Technology Fair</i> 9EL1 - Part 3 9EL2 - Part 2	Multiple choice	6 (6)
L5-L-2-S3BC	Interview - <i>So You Want to be an Exchange Student?</i> - <i>Anya and Sven</i> 9EL2 - Part 1	Multiple choice	12 (12)
L5-L-2-S3BC L5-L-1-S3BC	Poem - <i>My Puppy Likes the Water</i> 9EL2 - Part 3 9EL3 - Part 3	Multiple choice	8 (8)
L5-L-2-S3BC	Interviews - <i>Plastic Bag Debate</i> 9EL3 - Part 1	Multiple choice	12 (12)

(Poem ‘*My Puppy Likes the Water*’ used in 9EL2 and 9EL3 written by Kenn Nesbitt)

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 7.14 and 7.15.

Table 7.14 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	61
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	1
L5-R-4-S3BC	Applying a range of reference skills for various purposes with the help of cues	3
TOTAL		65

Table 7.15 S.3 Reading: Item Description and Question Types

Basic Competency	Item Description	Question Type	No. of Items (Score Points)
L6-R-1-S3BC L5-R-3-S3BC	Poem - <i>I Dreamed That There Were Dragons</i> 9ER1 - Part 1 9ER2 - Part 1	Multiple choice	10 (10)
L6-R-1-S3BC	Blog - <i>History</i> 9ER1 - Part 2 9ER3 - Part 2	Multiple choice	7 (7)
L5-R-1-S3BC L5-R-4-S3BC	Blog - <i>Preparing for Exams</i> 9ER1 - Part 3 9ER2 - Part 3	Multiple choice	18 (18)
L6-R-1-S3BC	Leaflet - <i>Cycling in Hong Kong</i> 9ER2 - Part 2 9ER3 - Part 1	Multiple choice	8 (8)
L6-R-1-S3BC L5-R-4-S3BC	Article - <i>Camels</i> 9ER3 - Part 3	Multiple choice	20 (20)

(Poem '*I Dreamed That There Were Dragons*' used in 9ER1 and 9ER2 written by Kenn Nesbitt)

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 7.16 and 7.17.

Table 7.16 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 7.17 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	Article – <i>Keeping and Caring for Pets in Hong Kong</i> 9EW1	1 (12)
L6-W-3-S3BC L5-W-5-S3BC	Email to Teacher – <i>Australia Trip Activities</i> 9EW2	1 (12)
	Letter to Principal – <i>New School Uniform</i> 9EW3	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 7.18.

Table 7.18 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 2012

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 intonation 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 local student and an exchange student, a considerable number of students were able to select the country the student came from.
(‘So You Want to be an Exchange Student’ - 9EL1 - Part 1 Q.10)
- About half of the students were also able to select the correct name of the company when listening to an interview between a reporter and the head of a technology company.
(‘Interview - Technology Fair’ - 9EL1 - Part 3 Q.2 and 9EL2 - Part 2 Q.2)
- Quite a number of students were also able to determine the details of measures Australia had put into place regarding plastic bags when compared to other countries’ efforts.
(‘Plastic Bag Debate’ - 9EL 3 - Part 1 Q.10)

Contextual Clues

- Students were able to draw conclusions from contextual clues in dialogues. For example, more than half of the students were able to select the most appropriate title for a book given the information provided in the interview.
(‘Interview with author Sheila Boxer’ - 9EL1 and 9EL3 - Part 2 Q.8)
- In an interview about the plastic bag levy about half of the students were able to conclude that the plastic bag levy in Hong Kong has been successful.
(‘Plastic Bag Debate’ - 9EL 3 - Part 1 Q.11)
- When listening to an interview between exchange students and with the aid of an information sheet a considerable number of students were able to determine that the

exchange students participating in a particular programme were secondary school students.

(‘So You Want to be an Exchange Student’ - 9EL1 and 9EL2 - Part 1 Q.1)

Tone/Intonation

- Students were generally capable of determining the tone/intonation of a person’s speech. For example, more than half of the students were able to determine the feeling of the reporter by the way he spoke, as well as determine the reactions of the gamers who were interviewed.

(‘Interview: Technology Fair’ - 9EL1 - Part 3 Q.1 & Q.6 and 9EL2 - Part 2 Q.1 & Q.6)

Rhyme

- Students were generally capable of determining the rhyme of words. For example, almost half of the students were able to work out the rhyming words from the poem.

(‘Poem – My Puppy Likes The Water’ - 9EL2 and 9EL3 - Part 3 Q.6)

Unfamiliar Expressions/Words

- Students were generally capable of working out the meaning of unfamiliar expressions. For example, almost half of the students were able to determine that if someone was ‘on the run’ it meant that they were escaping from the police.

(‘Interview with author Sheila Boxer’ - 9EL1 and 9EL3 - Part 2 Q.5)

- The same number of students were also able to conclude that in the poem the word ‘grin’ referred to an unfriendly smile in which teeth were showing.

(‘Poem – My Puppy Likes The Water’ - 9EL2 and 9EL3 - Part 3 Q.4)

- More than half of the students were also able to deduce that when someone ‘takes a message to heart’ it means that it is carefully listened to.

(‘Plastic Bag Debate’ - 9EL 3 - Part 1 Q.12)

Prediction

- Students were generally capable of predicting what could accommodate the animal mentioned in the poem in the future. Based on what they heard almost half of the students predicted that a water tank would be the most suitable of all the choices.

(‘Poem – My Puppy Likes The Water’ - 9EL2 and 9EL3 - Part 3 Q.8)

S.3 Reading

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

Specific Information

- Generally students could extract specific information in various reading passages. For example, from the history blog, about half of the students could identify the main reason as to why it became difficult to escape from East Germany.
(‘History Blog’ - 9ER1 and 9ER3 - Part 2 Q.1)
- Upon reading the blog about preparing for exams, almost half of the students were able to determine that the author did not always use mind maps. They were also able to decide which information (e.g. using colourful work) was not given.
(‘Preparing for Exams Blog’ - 9ER1 and 9ER2 – Part 3 Q.11 and Q.12)

Recognising Keywords

- About half of the students reading the article on camels were able to recognise that ‘bone dry’ described their living environment.
(‘Camel Article’ - 9ER3 - Part 3 Q.5)

Dictionary Entry

- Generally students were able to apply their dictionary skills. For example, more than half of the students were able to use the definition and the sample sentence provided to work out the meaning of the word ‘cram’.
(‘Preparing for Exams Blog’ - 9ER1 and 9ER2 - Part 3 Q.13)
- On reading the article about camels the same number was also able to determine that the word ‘cull’ meant to destroy animals.
(‘Camel Article’ - 9ER3 - Part 3 Q.18)

Unfamiliar Phrases/Expressions

- Students could generally work out the meaning of unfamiliar expressions. Half of the students were able to understand the poem and connect the words ‘dragons’ and ‘flaming breath’ with dragons being able to breathe fire.
(‘Poem - I Dreamed That There Were Dragons’ - 9ER1 and 9ER2 - Part 1 Q.4)
- The same number of students reading the history blog was also able to work out that to ‘stem the flow’ of something meant to stop it completely.
(‘History Blog’ - 9ER1 and 9ER3 - Part 2 Q.3)

Contextual Clues

- Students were able to draw conclusions from contextual clues. For example, half of the students were able to conclude that the character in the poem was found in bed after the party.
(‘Poem - I Dreamed That There Were Dragons’ - 9ER1 and 9ER2 - Part 1 Q.2)

Inference Skills

- Students could comprehend information that was implied. For example, when reading the poem about the dragons and the party they were throwing, more than half of the students were able to use the context provided to infer the dragons were teaching the character to dance.
(‘Poem - I Dreamed That There Were Dragons’ - 9ER1 and 9ER2 - Part 1 Q.8)

Distinguishing Fact from Opinion

- Students were able to distinguish between facts and opinions. For example, more than half of the students were able to determine that the statement ‘the number of camels should be reduced’ was not a fact, but rather the opinion of the writer. Likewise students were also able to determine the statement ‘it is cruel to kill camels’ was also the opinion of the writer and not a fact. Half of the students were also able to determine that not needing to drink large amounts of water was a fact and not the opinion of the writer.
(‘Article - Camels’ - 9ER3 - Part 3 Q.9, 13, 15.)

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:


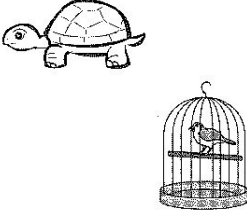
- generally relevant and adequate content but with limited ideas and little or no elaboration
- paragraphs generally developed based on prompts with an attempt to use cohesive devices and sequence ideas appropriately
- the use of familiar vocabulary and simple language patterns with some degree of appropriacy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

Article – Keeping and Caring for Pets in Hong Kong (9EW1)

In this writing task, students were asked to write an article about keeping pets in Hong Kong, the advantages and disadvantage of keeping pets and also how to take care of them.

Your teacher has asked you to write an article for the school newspaper about keeping pets in Hong Kong. Write about two or three pets, the advantages and disadvantages of keeping these pets and how to take care of them.

You may use some of the ideas from the leaflet below and/or your own ideas in your writing. Write the article in about 150 words.

Pets in Hong Kong		
<i>So You Want to Keep a Pet?</i>	<i>Types of Pets</i>	<i>You Might Need...</i>
<p><u>Why?</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • furry/cute/cuddly • for company • to play with <p><u>Things to Think About</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • size • food • noise • care • where to keep it 	<p><u>Unusual Pets</u> e.g.</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a cage • special food – bugs/mice • medicine • a vet
	<p><u>Typical Pets</u> e.g.</p> 	<p><i>Some More Questions!</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does your pet need training? • What animals are better suited to the living environment in Hong Kong?



Not sure about having a pet?

Visit the Society for the Protection of All Animals (SPAA)

*88 King Bay Road
King Bay, Kowloon City
Tel: 13540011
www.spaa.com*

They need volunteers – take a dog for a walk or groom a cat!


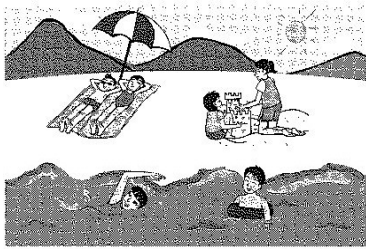
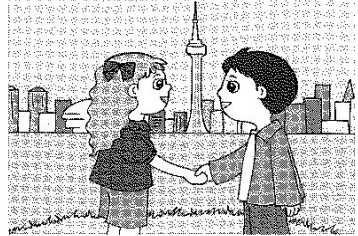
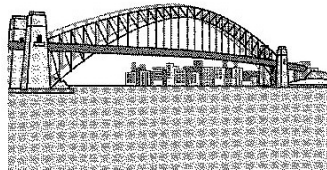
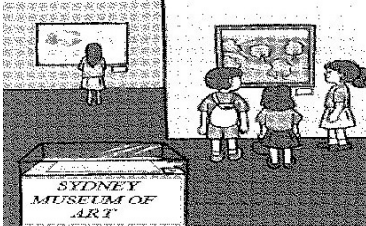

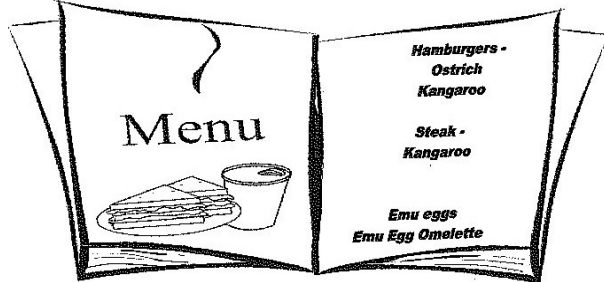
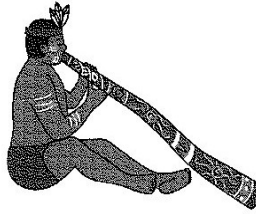
Try before you buy as they say!

Email to Teacher – Australia Trip Activities (9EW2)

In this writing task, students were asked to write an email to a teacher detailing activities they would like to do while on a school trip to Australia and provide reasons.

You are Jackie. Your teacher is organising a school trip to Australia for your class. She needs to choose three activities for the students and has asked you for your opinion. Send her an email explaining which three activities you would like to do and why.

You may use some of the ideas from the pamphlet below and/or your own ideas in your writing. Write the email in about 150 words.

AUSTRALIA TRIP ACTIVITIES		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • meet famous Australian animals e.g. kangaroos and koalas • only in Australia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • enjoy the beach • summer fun 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • learn English • meet Australian students 
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • climb the bridge • see great views 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • visit a museum • find out about Australia's history 	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • go shopping • buy souvenirs
 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • try some Australian food 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • meet native Australians (Aborigines) • learn how to play a didgeridoo (Aboriginal musical instrument) 

Note: Onomatopaeic spelling was used for the word 'didgeridoo' to make it easier for students to spell the word in their writing.

Letter to Principal – New School Uniform (9EW3)

In this writing task, students were asked to write a letter to the principal telling her what they liked and disliked about their current school uniform as well as providing suggestions for the new school uniform.

The principal of your school is considering changing the school uniform. In a memo she has asked students to write her a letter telling her what they like and dislike about the current school uniform. She also wants suggestions about the new uniform.

In about 150 words, write the letter. You may use some of the ideas from the memo below and/or your own ideas in your writing.

MEMO TO ALL STUDENTS



Dear Students,

I am thinking about changing the school uniform. I asked the Student Union (SU) members what they thought of the school uniform. The SU members gave me the following list of items that they liked, disliked or wanted to change.

Summer / winter uniform for boys / girls

- pants
- skirt
- cheongsam
- tie / bowtie
- jacket
- shirt / blouse
- PE uniform
- shoes and socks
- colours

Please write me a letter and tell me what you like and dislike about the current school uniform. Also give me your suggestions about the new school uniform.

I look forward to hearing from you so that we can come up with a new school uniform that everyone will like and wear with pride!

Mrs. J. Leung
Principal

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

Article – Keeping and Caring for Pets in Hong Kong (9EW1) - Student Exemplar 1

Keeping and Caring for Pets in Hong Kong

Firstly, I want to keep a pet is a dog because the dog is so cute and can play with me, make me happy and give my family happy. I would buy some special food to give the dog. I would buy a dog home to give the dog to keep it. Next I want to keep a pet is birds because birds is furry and cute. The birds can singing. I might need a cage to the birds. Last, I want to keep a pet is a snake because the snake is so cuddly, I would buy some food to give the snake ate and I would make the home to keep it snake. If you not sure about having a pet, you can go to the Society for the Protection of All Animals to buy a dog for a walk a green cat and you can call 13540011 to buy the pet.

Annotation

The passage contains simple vocabulary and language patterns. Information provided is not off topic but it is lacking in depth of content and is prompt dependent. It does talk about wanting to keep a dog, bird and snake. Some advantages of keeping these pets are given – ‘dog is cute, birds is furry and cute...’

Language is limited and many errors are made using the same structure – ‘I want to keep a pet is a dog’ instead of I would like to keep a dog as a pet

The student doesn’t understand the meaning of the word ‘cuddly’ or ‘furry’ and writes ‘the snake is so cuddly’, and the ‘birds is furry’. ‘I would buy a dog home to give the dog to keep it’ instead of I would buy a dog to keep and give it a home is an error in sentence formation. These errors also affect meaning.

There is simple use of connectives – *'firstly'*, *'next'*, *'lastly'*. Also, there is a simple order to the writing as the dog is mentioned first, then the bird and lastly the snake.

There is limited audience awareness as this piece seems to be more of a list of reasons as to why this person wants to keep a pet, not a general article about keeping pets in Hong Kong. There is no appropriate introduction and an attempt at a conclusion by mentioning the SPAA.

Email to Teacher – Australia Trip Activities (9EW2) - Student Exemplar 2

Email

From: Jackie
To: msgfwong@hklss.edu.hk
Sent: Wednesday, June 25, 2012 11:45 AM
Subject: My School Trip Activities Choices

Dear Ms. Wong,

I have chosen the three activities I am interested in. Firstly, we meet famous Australian animals for example kangaroos and koalas. It was only in Australia. So it was special. I think we should to meet them, my classmates should be liked this.

Secondly, we can visit a museum while find out about Australia's history. Because we should not only at play, we need learning and know other country history. I listen, for my mother, she said Australia is very clean, free and there people was very nice. We should learning Australian life.

Finally, we can enjoy the beach. I know Australian weather was hot. So if we go beach swimming, playing some ball game. It is very funny and unforgettable, our friendship will be good.

This is my opinion, would you like this.

Yours faithfully
Jackie

Annotation

The email is largely based on the prompts provided with little or no added details to support the activities chosen→ *'meet famous Australian animals'*→ *'was only in Australia'*→ *'was special...'* They will visit a museum because *'we should not only at play'*→ *'need learning and know other country hisory...'* They will *'enjoy the beach'*→ *'Australian weather was hot'*→ *'playing som ball game'*→ *'funny and unforgettable'*, *'our friendship will be good...'*

There are many errors in sentence structure and also in spelling, some of which affect meaning→ *'I listen for my mother, she said Austrlaia is very clear, free and there people was very nice'* instead of My mother told me that Australia is very clean and the people there are very nice... *'som'* instead of some, *'hisory'* instead of history,

Simple connectives – *'firstly'*, *'secondly'* and *'finally'* are used.

The concluding paragraph is inappropriate – *'This is my opinion would you like this'* instead of something like These are my ideas/opinions about which activities we should do. I hope that you choose these.

The complimentary close is also incorrect with a spelling mistake and incorrect use of a comma→ *'Yoars,faithfully Jackie'* instead of Yours/Your student/Best regards...Jackie

Letter to Principal – New School Uniform (9EW3) - Student Exemplar 3

Letter to the principal

Mrs. J. Leung
Principal
SGKFLR Secondary School
King's Lane
Sheung Shui
N.T.
Hong Kong

After I read the memo about changing the school uniform, I may give some suggestions about the new school uniform.

Let talk about the summer uniform for boys. Our old uniform's colours is ~~white~~ white. It is easy to make dirty when we having lunch. I think every students have this trouble. So, I think the new uniform's colour should be brown or yellow that the dirty will difficult to see. About the old PE uniform, many students think that it is too hot when doing exercise. I think the new uniform can more thin.

About the winter uniform. ~~the jacket~~ Most of us think that the jacket ~~isn't~~ doesn't get warm. The new jacket should had better - designed ~~about~~.

#About the uniform for girls should ask girls. Their suggestion must more suitable for them. I hope my suggestion can help the school to designed the new uniform.

Edison Chan
Students

Annotation

The passage contains some ideas but these are not expressed with details. Ideas mentioned include uniform colours and pros and cons of colours, the old jacket and what is wrong with it with preferences given for the new jacket.

Simple and familiar vocabulary is used and sentences are simply structured with spelling mistakes and errors in construction. For example, '*dirty will difficult to see*' instead of dirt will be difficult to see, '*About the uniform for girls should ask girls*', instead of You should ask the girls what they think about their uniform and '*Their suggestion must more suitable for them*' instead of Their suggestions will be more appropriate/suitable/relevant. The use of the # symbol at the beginning of a paragraph is inappropriate.

Also there is incorrect use of the modal – may – '*I may give some suggestions*' instead of I would like to make some suggestions.

No greeting is used to begin the letter and the complimentary close is inappropriate and lacks the formality required of a letter to the principal – '*Edison Chan, Students*'.

Article – Keeping and Caring for Pets in Hong Kong (9EW1) - Student

Exemplar 4

Keeping and Caring for Pets in Hong Kong

Keeping pets in Hong Kong is not difficult. We always saw the pet shop while we are walking on the road.

So, how to keep a pet?

Dog, it is a pet. You might want to keep a dog because it is cute and funny. You can always play with them like play ball game, walk in the park..... But if you want to keep a dog, you need to think those things. Size, is it very big, or just smaller than a bag. Food, what it eats, dog food. They also make big noise when they are little.

Snake. There are not too many people keep a pet snake in Hong Kong. But, someone think that they are beautiful. Some snake are big, but usually the pet snake are small. They eat meat and they are very quiet without the noise when they open the mouth.

Dog and snake are the pet we can see in Hong Kong. But if you want to keep it, you might need a cage, some special food, medicine and vet.

It is easy to keep a pet in Hong Kong, but it is not easy to keep it long.

Annotation

There is some relevant content in this piece with the writer mentioning two pets – dogs and snakes - and why the reader might want to keep either of them ‘ *You might want to keep a dog because it is cute and funny.*’, along with some reasons – ‘ *play with them...like ball game, walk in the park.*’ The snake is a pet that ... ‘ *not too many people keep a pet snake in Hong Kong.*’ Some reasons are provided... ‘ *they are beautiful...big...eat meat and they are very quiet...*’

Ideas in this piece of writing are not expressed effectively with the writer basing all information on the prompts provided especially from ‘Things To Think About’ – ‘*Dog*→ *size, food* and ‘You Might Need’ – ‘*cage, special food, medicine and vet*’. The writer does not show any understanding of some of these and why they are important points for people to consider if they want to keep animals. The piece uses familiar vocabulary and simple sentence structure.

There is also poor linkage between the paragraphs and the paragraphs themselves start in strange ways – ‘*Dog, it a pet.*’ and ‘*Snake. There are not too many....*’ In addition to this, both the introduction and the ending are a bit confusing and unclear – ‘ *We always saw the pet shop while walking on the road.*’ and ‘*It is easy to keep a pet in Hong Kong, but it is not easy to keep it long.*’

Email to Teacher – Australia Trip Activities (9EW2) - Student Exemplar 5

Email

From: Jackie
To: msgfwong@hkiss.edu.hk
Sent: Wednesday, June 25, 2012 11:45 AM
Subject: My School Trip Activities Choices

Dear Ms. Wong,


I have chosen the three activities I am interested in. I ~~am~~ ^{would} like ~~to~~ go to ~~see~~ ^{Australia} meet famous Australian animals for example kangaroos and koalas they ~~are~~ ^{was} very famous and many students love ~~they~~ their cute look. ~~Moreover~~ Moreover we also can meet ~~many~~ a lot of exciting ~~and~~ since like animals fight and kill and eat ~~there~~ ~~enjoy~~ ~~enjoy~~ ~~enjoy~~ and other animals body have blood. Oh ~~the~~ that make me hope the ~~date~~ ~~date~~ date come fastly.

Then, I opinion we can go to beach. You know haven't many clear ^{over the} and big beach in Hong Kong, I think students will love it and enjoy the summer fun, we can swim, play sand, ball games the main point is sun ~~there~~ there sun is very good. ~~It~~ ~~is~~ a health skin should be have more to ~~enjoy~~ "play" with sunshin!

Last but ~~not~~ ~~last~~ "I want to go shopping. I think any trip go to travel must will go shopping buy souvenirs and go back Hong Kong give friends so will need it.

I hope we can have more time ~~to~~ ~~stay~~ stay in Australia, there some so many place or activities is good. ~~It~~ ~~is~~ Like museum also is famous we can see history or art about Australia's. Climb the bridge to see great views is good too. But we have not enough time to ~~finish~~ ~~finish~~ ~~finish~~ that.

Anyway we ~~only~~ ^{only} chose this ~~three~~ ^{three} activities ~~that~~ ^{only} that OK. Thank you ~~you~~ for your asking.


Jackie

Annotation

The passage contains a simple range of vocabulary and language patterns with errors in spelling – ‘*exmaple*’ instead of example, ‘*there*’ instead of their, ‘*meanponit*’ instead of main point, ‘*helath*’ instead of healthy, ‘*sunshin*’ instead of sunshine, ‘*enoght*’ instead of enough.

There are also errors in grammar and syntax which affect meaning – ‘*that make me hope*’ instead of that makes me hope, ‘*thank you for your asking*’ instead of thank you for asking, and long sentences which are also difficult to understand - ‘*I think any trip go to travel must will go shopping buy souvenirs and go back Hong Kong give friends so will need it.*’.

The content is generally relevant, but it is prompt dependent and the last paragraphs contain a list of the prompts provided without any detailed explanation. Paragraphs contain some supporting details.

Letter to Principal – New School Uniform (9EW3) - Student Exemplar 6

Letter to the principal

Mrs. J. Leung
Principal
SGKFLR Secondary School
King's Lane
Sheung Shui
N.T.
Hong Kong

Principal, I knew that you wanted to give a change for the school uniform. I am having some suggestion about the new uniform.

First of all, school should not limited what kind of shoes students wear. Such as boots, if students could wear boot in winter, it will certain be warm.

Secandly, I think student ought to wear their own jacket in winter as the school uniform was not enough warm and comfortable.

Also, the winter PE uniform and Summer PE uniform should ^{not be} same. In winter, students wear a T-shirt in wether 9°. How freeze they are! So that the winter PE uniform must be different, You can change shirt instead T-shirt.

Lasily, I want to ask you what I dislike about the current school uniform. I dont like the colours of the uniform, white seems a easier dirty colours. Green or blue should be better.

I Hope my suggestions can be allowed, and thank you for your attention.

Love

Grace Kong

26th June, 2012.

Annotation

The passage contains a range of simple vocabulary and sometimes incorrect language patterns. There are errors in spelling - 'wether' instead of weather, 'lasily' instead of lastly.

The language used is quite clumsy – '*I am having some suggestion about the new uniform*' instead of I have some suggestions, '*I want to ask you what I dislike about the current school uniform*' instead of you asked what we dislike about the current school uniform, '*white seems a easier dirty colours*' instead of white is an easy colour to get dirty.

Some connectives are used correctly – '*first of all*', '*secondly*' but there are also weak links between the paragraphs.

The letter includes an inappropriate salutation – '*Principal*' which should be Dear Principal. There is also an attempt at a complimentary close but it is completely inappropriate '*Love*'.

The content is generally relevant, but it is prompt dependent with only some elaboration given. The paragraphs contain some supporting details as to why certain parts of the uniform need to be changed.

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 2012

S.3 Listening

Students with best performance demonstrated the ability to understand topics, ideas, information, preferences, intentions and attitudes in simple spoken texts in familiar and unfamiliar topics. Students could extract specific information, distinguish main ideas from supporting details, connect ideas with contextual clues and discriminate between intonation for a range of purposes when dialogues were delivered clearly and in generally familiar accents.

In addition to doing well at the basic competency level (see Performance of S.3 Students with Minimally Acceptable Levels of Basic Competence in TSA 2012), the following are examples that show the students’ ability to answer correctly a range of higher order questions.

Contextual Clues

- Students were capable of identifying various contextual clues in conversations. For example, students were able to identify that when an enthusiastic gamer talked about blowing up the screen size, it meant increasing the size.
(‘Interview Technology Fair’ - 9EL1 - Part 3 Q.2 and 9EL2 - Part 2 Q.2)
- Many students were also able to work out from listening to a poem what makes the ‘puppy’ different, and then from the clues given they were also able to work out what the animal called a ‘puppy’ actually was.
(‘Poem – My Puppy Likes The Water’ - 9EL2 and 9EL3 - Part 3 Q.2 and Q.5)
- Many students were able to work out the duration of an exchange visit and also that the students participating in this particular exchange programme were secondary school students.
(‘So You Want to be an Exchange Student’ - 9EL1 and 9EL2 - Part 1 Q.1 and Q.2)

Specific Information

- The majority of students were able to listen for specific information. They could provide the age of the exchange students as well as their country of residence. They were also able to determine how long it takes the students to get to school and how they get to school.

(‘So You Want to be an Exchange Student’ - 9EL1 - Part 1 Q.4, Q.5, Q.9 and Q.7 and 9EL2 - Part 1 Q.7, Q.8, Q.9 and Q.11)

- Students were also able to determine the exact number of bags that were used in Hong Kong each year.

(‘Plastic Bag Debate’ - 9EL3 - Part 1 Q.2)

Unfamiliar Expressions

- Students were able to deduce the meaning of the phrase ‘toxic to the environment’ by listening to what was being said about plastic bags and how long they take to degrade.

(‘Plastic Bag Debate’ - 9EL3 - Part 1 Q.4)

- Students were able to deduce the meaning of host family by using the information provided and the context of the interviews and the persons being interviewed.

(‘So You Want to be an Exchange Student’ - 9EL1 - Part 1 Q.3 and 9EL2 - Part 1 Q.3)

S.3 Reading

Students with best performance generally used a wider range of reading strategies to understand the meaning of texts with some degree of complexity. They demonstrated 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 a poem, blogs, a leaflet and an article. Students were also capable of using inference skills in certain passages with familiar topics.

In addition to doing well at the basic competency level (see Performance of S.3 Students with Minimally Acceptable Levels of Basic Competence in TSA 2012), the following are examples that show the students’ ability to answer correctly a range of higher order questions.

Contextual Clues

- Students could identify various contextual clues in passages. For example, in a poem, students answered correctly that the dragon party was being held at night.
(‘Poem – I Dreamed That There Were Dragons’ - 9ER1 and 9ER2 - Part 1 Q.7)

Unfamiliar Words

- Students were capable of determining the meaning of an unfamiliar word. For example when reading the poem about the dragons many students were able to work out that when dragons throw a raging party it is a fantastic one.
(‘Poem – I Dreamed That There Were Dragons’ - 9ER1 and 9ER2 - Part 1 Q.3)

Distinguishing Fact from Opinion

- Students could extract information from the text to conclude that ‘Camels can have one or two humps’ was a fact, not an opinion.
(‘Article - Camels’ - 9ER3 - Part 3 Q.8.)

Connecting Ideas

- Students were able to use the information provided in the various sections of the blog about preparing for exams to work out what the useful revision methods were.
(‘Preparing for Exams Blog’ - 9ER1 and 9ER2 - Part 3 Q.3)

Inference

- Students could comprehend implied information. For example when reading the blog about preparing for exams many students were able to infer why students used highlighters, points and also colours in their work.
(‘Preparing for Exams Blog’ - 9ER1 and 9ER2 - Part 3 Q.5)

Specific Information

- The majority of students were able to read and locate specific information. Many were able to find the information that point form could be used to summarise notes.
(‘Preparing for Exams Blog’ - 9ER1 and 9ER2 - Part 3 Q.10)
- In the information leaflet about cycling in Hong Kong many students were able to work out what riders must not do and also what they should do when riding their bikes in the dark.
(‘Leaflet – Cycling In Hong Kong’ - 9ER2 - Part 2 Q.3 & Q.5 and 9ER3 - Part 1 Q.3 & Q.5)

Identifying Details That Support a Main Idea

- Students were able to locate details that supported a main idea. In the blog about preparing and revising for exams, many students were able to work out the advice that the student needed.

(‘Preparing for Exams Blog’ - 9ER1 and 9ER2 - Part 3 Q. 16)

Understanding the Connection between Ideas

- Many students were able to understand the connection between ideas. They were able to match the idea that camels have a special way of walking with the fact (from the table) that camels sway when they walk.

(‘Article - Camels’ - 9ER3 - Part 3 Q.2.)

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

Article – Keeping and Caring for Pets in Hong Kong (9EW1) - Student

Exemplar 7

Keeping and Caring for Pets in Hong Kong

Nowadays many Hong Kong people like keeping pets at home because of their cute outlook and for fun. But they do not think about are their living environment suitable for keeping a pet and do they have enough time and money. Today I ^{would} like to introduce two common pets, dogs and tortoise to all of you.

Dogs are the most common pet that can find in Hong Kong. People like keeping dogs because they are cute and people can play with them. But people need to pay attention on many things for keeping dogs. First, they will easily be sick if you feed them some human food for them like chocolate. Second, dogs always bark loudly, so you need to make sure that the noise will not effect your neighbours. Third, dogs needs lots of care, they have feeling like human and they will feel sad and lonely if you don't spend much time to play with them. So you need to make sure that you have enough time to bring your dogs for a walk at least once a day. Also, some of the flats in Hong Kong do not allow people to keep dogs at their house, so you need to make sure that your building allow people keeping dogs. Lastly, you need to bring your dog to the vet frequently.

If you really like to keep a pet but don't have enough times and space, keeping tortoise is a very good choice for all of you. The advantages for keeping tortoise are they are small in size so you don't need to worry about don't have enough space for keeping them, also you don't need to bring them for a walk everyday because they can walk freely. Anytime they like at your house. Moreover, tortoise usually have a long life so you don't need to afraid that they

will die very soon and being sad. The disadvantage for keeping tortoise is they will not play with you and you can't teach them any skills. For keep tortoise, you can't give them human food to eat and need to provide them enough water.

Also, tortoise love sunshine very much so you can keep them near the window so they can enjoy sunbathing but you need to make sure that the windows are closed and they won't fall onto the street easily. You also need to bring them to the vet frequently to make sure that they are healthy.

It is fun to keep a pet but you need to make sure that you have enough free time since they have feeling and need your love and care. If you are not sure about having a pet, you can visit the Society for the Protection of All Animals at 88 King's Road, King's Bay, Kowloon City since they need volunteers to take a dog for a walk or groom a cat, so you can try before you buy. If you need more information about it, you can phone 13540011 or check the website of the SPAA: www.spaa.com.

Annotation

Sufficient examples are provided in the paragraphs – pets are kept for fun, dogs can get sick if they eat ‘*human food*’ like chocolate, they also bark loudly, need lots of care, owners need to ensure they have enough time for their pets→ tortoises are good choices if you don’t have the time, and the writer goes on to list advantages and disadvantages of keeping a tortoise

Some spelling mistakes are made, for example – ‘*turtoise*’ instead of tortoise. A range of simple but topic specific vocabulary is used but some sentences run on and there are errors in agreement – ‘*Third, dogs needs*’ instead of Third, dogs need, ‘*for keep tortoise*’ instead of when/if keeping tortoises. The use of ‘like’ and ‘want’ is mixed up – ‘*If you really like to keep a pet*’ instead of if you really want to keep a pet.

The beginning features a general introduction about pets and the writing then becomes specific about the two pets that will be talked about. The ending is used to restate points made and gives websites for obtaining more information. Both are appropriate.

The features of an article are evident in the introduction, different animals are mentioned, reasons and advice are given, and there is a summing up.

Email to Teacher – Australia Trip Activities (9EW2) - Student Exemplar 8

Email

From: Jackie
To: msgfwong@hkiss.edu.hk
Sent: Wednesday, June 25, 2012 11:45 AM
Subject: My School Trip Activities Choices

Dear Ms. Wong,

I have chosen the three activities I am interested in. As everyone knows, Australia is famous for its beautiful natural scenery and biodiversity. Therefore, I think we can focus more on these aspects during the trip.

The most important thing is to visit the safari there as there are some unique animals that can only be found in Australia. For example, kangaroos and koalas! I know that some activities are arranged for tourists just like feeding them or taking pictures with them. I am sure our classmates will definitely enjoy participating in this kind of activities. Besides getting closer with the animals, we can also learn many from the guide as some tutorial classes will be arranged for us too.

Apart from visiting the safari, we should definitely meet the native Australians, Aborigines. It will be an unforgettable experience for all of us as there are only a few Aborigines left. During the visit, we can learn how to play a Aboriginal musical instrument called didgeridoo and know more about their culture and interests. They may invite us to try the traditional dishes too.

For the third activity, I decided to try something new. I suggest going to some farms and make ice-cream by fresh milk by ourselves. I know there are many workshops for making ice-cream ^{in Australia}. We can take the fresh milk from the cow by ourselves and make an unique ice-cream just for us only. There are some farmers or local people who will give help to us during the process so we do not have to worry ^{about} the safety. Our classmates love eating and trying different food, I think they will love this activity.

These are my ideas about the trip. If you have any doubt, you can find me anytime. I hope my suggestions are useful! Thank you.

Yours sincerely,
Jackie.

Annotation

Ideas are expressed effectively and they are not limited to the ideas provided in the question paper. The first paragraph mentions a ‘*safari*’ and this is connected to the ‘*unique*’ animals that inhabit Australia. The writer goes on to link this to ‘*feeding them*’ and ‘*taking pictures with them*’.

The second paragraph deals with meeting the native Australians – one supporting reason given is that ‘*there are only a few Aborigines left*’ (this is in fact not true) and students ‘*can learn to play the didgeridoo*’. The connection is also made between the Aborigines and traditional dishes.

An impressive range of appropriate vocabulary is used – *biodiversity*, *safari* (this is actually incorrectly used as it means a journey, not a place – confused with a zoo/safari park), ‘*unique animals*’. Some errors have been made ‘*we can also learn many from the guide*’, instead of we can learn many things from the guide, ‘*who will give help to us*’ instead of who will help us.

Paragraphs have been developed with supporting ideas and reasons as to why. Sophisticated discourse markers have been used – ‘*apart from*’, ‘*besides*’, ‘*getting*’...

The format is appropriate and the complimentary close is correct → ‘*Yours sincerely, Jackie*’.

Letter to Principal – New School Uniform (9EW3) - Student Exemplar 9

Letter to the principal

Mrs. J. Leung
Principal
SGKFLR Secondary School
King's Lane
Sheung Shui
N.T.
Hong Kong

Dear Mrs Leung,

I am Josephine Chan from 3B. I would like to share my views towards the issue of changing ^{the} school uniform. To begin with, let me talk about the summer uniform first. Girls from SGKFLR Secondary School are wearing skirts with bowties. We think that the design is unique and stylish. However, I think that cheongsam is more suitable for us since our school was built more than 100 years ago. Cheongsam is a kind of traditional culture of China which suits our school motto "Treasure".

For the PE uniform, I like them very much. We have five different colours of PE T-shirts which represent the colours of the five houses. This can show the united spirit of the boys and girls ^{in the house}. The PE uniform for summer and winter is the same, so I think no changes are needed. However, if the PE jacket is in blue colour instead of black, it will be more trendy and energetic.

For winter, I think the design is a bit complicated. We need to wear the shirt, then the tie, and then the skirt. If the summer uniform will be changed to cheongsam, I think that the winter uniform can also change to cheongsam with long sleeves.

Lastly, we think that the colour of our shoes which is white is not desirable since it is not resistant to any dirt and spillage. If we change to new uniform like cheongsam, it will be weird to wear white shoes. I think wearing simple black shoes with white socks will be alright and look great.

I am sorry that I don't know the opinions of boys but I know they will write to you soon. I do hope that the changes of school uniform can make the schoolmates ^{feel} more comfortable and ^{look} neat. I believe that every student from SGKFLR Secondary School will treasure the moments of wearing the school uniforms and wear with pride. Thank you!

Yours sincerely,

Josephine Chan

Annotation

The school uniform is in part related to the school's history and this is used as justification for changing to the cheongsam.

The PE uniform is discussed, touching on the colours of the T-Shirts and connecting this to the spirit of the students who wear them. Changes are suggested to the jacket so that it will be '*trendy and energetic*'.

The shoes and their colour are also discussed in detail with supporting reasons provided for a change in the colour and why the existing colour is not suitable.

An impressive range of sentence patterns and vocabulary is used – '*PE T-Shirts represent the colours of the five houses*' → '*show the united spirit, trendy and energetic, desirable, resistant to any spillage*' but minor errors are made – '*towards the issue*', instead of about the issue, the spelling of all right as '*alright*', '*wear with pride*' instead of wear it with pride

Ideas are closely connected within the paragraphs – '*PE T-Shirts represent the colours of the five houses*' → '*show the united spirit...*'.

Format is appropriate and correctly used and the last paragraph neatly concludes the letter.

Exemplar 10

Keeping and Caring for Pets in Hong Kong

I think some of you have pets at home. And so do I. I have a dog at home. For me, I think dogs are adorable. Also, it knows when you are sad and they will sit beside you for company. It helps me a lot when I am feeling negative.

Here are some advice for you if you want to have a pet. Some popular pets, such as dogs, cats or hamsters are some good choices. For dogs and cats, they need to have some space for them to move. Their food can be easily found in supermarkets. Also, they need a cage for them to sleep in. Some of you may think that dogs are more easily handle than cats, but for me, it depends. Dogs are very intelligent. If you want to teach it some basic skills, they can learn them quickly. But if you want it to jump over some wheels or more difficult actions, it should join some training courses. On the other side, cats are indoor-pets, you don't have to take it for a walk.

There are also some unusual pets, eg. spiders, snakes. You must buy a cage or a tank for these unusual animals. Also, their food should be brought in the pet shop. Before you get these unusual pets, please consider whether you really want to take care of it.

Also, there are some typical pets, for example tortoises and birds. They also need a cage to live in. Also, birds may produce a lot of sounds. You should consider whether it may disturb others.

I think dogs are better suited to the living environment in Hong Kong because Hong Kong citizens always work under big pressure. Dogs can help you to relax and play with you. However, you should think about your house's size or the pet's size, its noise. The most important is any time to care for it or to take it for a walk. Dogs enjoy the outdoor.

If you aren't sure about having a pet, you can visit the Society for Protection of All Animals (SPAA) website, www.spaa.com. They need some volunteers to take a dog for a walk or to groom a cat. You can try this before you buy the pets.

Annotation

The content is relevant and details are provided. Explaining why dogs are adorable → *'sit beside you for company...helps when I am feeling negative...'*.

Explaining that *'Cats are indoor pets'* → *'don't have to take it for a walk'* → agreement error, instead of don't have to take them for a walk.

A good range of expressions and vocabulary are used and some minor mistakes are made. Uses *'on the other side'* instead of on the other hand. *'Dogs enjoy the outdoor'*, instead of Dogs enjoy the outdoors. Uses *'brought'* instead of bought.

Paragraphs are well developed with supporting details about animals and why they make good pets and why not → *'birds make a lot of sounds'*.

The article begins and ends appropriately.

Email to Teacher – Australia Trip Activities (9EW2) - Student Exemplar 11

Email

From: Jackie
To: msgfwong@hkiss.edu.hk
Sent: Wednesday, June 25, 2012 11:45 AM
Subject: My School Trip Activities Choices

Dear Ms. Wong,

I have chosen the three activities I am interested in.

First, in order to improve our English, I think that meeting Australian students is a good choice for us. I think that we can go to visit some schools in Australia and have lessons with the Australian students. We can know each other more and it can encourage our students to speak English and talk with foreign people. Also, I think that we can prepare some special souvenirs which are about our local culture before we go to Australia so that we can let the Australian students to know more about Hong Kong.

I do think that many of us are interested about the school's life in Australia, it will be very funny if we can meet the Australian students. Visiting the campus in Australia also will be an attractive activity as the campus there must be larger than ours, I think our students will be excited if we can visit the Australian school.

Second, I suggest to meet famous Australian animals such as kangaroos and koalas. These animals are valuable as they only can be found in Australia. Many students wish they can have a chance to meet the animals. I know that there are some zoo in Australia which can let the people to hug the koalas, it is a good place for us to go. Meeting the famous Australian animals also can let us to know more the environmental problems, as we know, the number of these valuable animals are decreasing due to different types of pollution, it is a chance for us to learn how to protect these animals and to love our earth.

Third, I do think that meeting the native Australians, Aborigines, is a good choice for us. The history of Aborigines is long and they have their own culture. They are famous at playing a musical instrument, didgeridoo. We may ask them to teach us how to play a didgeridoo and we can share our Chinese culture with them. It is also a great chance to encourage our students to communicate with others in English. Also, I know that the Aborigines will play a drama to the visitors which is about their traditional culture. It will be very interesting for us to meet the native Australians.

Here are all my suggestions, I don't know are they useful or not but I hope that you will agree my ideas. Anyway, I am really looking forward to the school trip and thanks for you to prepare the trip for us. I believe that it will be amazing and unforgettable!

Love,
Jackie.

Annotation

Ideas are expressed effectively – starting with meeting Australian students and reasons why this would be a good idea→ encourage students to speak English, teach students about Hong Kong, see a school campus...

Seeing Australian animals – this is further connected to the environment when the writer indicates that they are only found in Australia and that these animals are being affected by pollution, and the students can find out more about the environmental problems as well as learn how to protect them.

Meeting Aborigines is connected to learning about their culture and how to play an instrument as well as using English to communicate.

A wide range of vocabulary is used, but there are mistakes made. ‘*First*’, ‘*Second*’ and ‘*Third*’ are used instead of Firstly, Secondly, Thirdly.

Use of ‘*We can know each other more*’ instead of We can get to know each other better.

Using ‘*to know more about*’ instead of teaching them more about... and ‘*which can let the people to hug the koalas*’ instead of which lets (the) people hold/touch the koalas.

There is strong and clear organization within and between the paragraphs and the ideas flow easily and in a logical manner

The features of an email are evident and the email is strong and topic specific. However, the ending is a familiar one→ ‘*Love*’ which doesn’t match with the tone of the rest of the email.

Letter to Principal – New School Uniform (9EW3) - Student Exemplar 12

Letter to the principal

Mrs. J. Leung
Principal
SGKFLR Secondary School
King's Lane
Sheung Shui
N.T.
Hong Kong

Dear Mrs. Leung,

We like the colour of our current uniform for girls, which is blue and white in colour, and also the style of it. We suggest you should keep the colour and style of the uniform for girls. But one thing we dislike about the dress is, the white colour part of the dress is not white enough. We dislike our pants for boys and jacket for both boys and girls, for the pants, the material was so thick that the boys felt extremely hot, in summer. We suggest the material of making and uncomfortable the pants for boys shouldn't be that thick and hot. Also, the jacket that we're wearing now is not warm enough, a lot of students were sick last winter because the jackets for them were not warm enough.

We like our PE uniform the best, every houses have their own special designed PE uniform tops, and four houses have a special name too! Red house is called Mars, Green house is called Jupiter. Blue house is called Mercury and Yellow house is called Venus. The tops that each house designed specially were so special and interesting that we urge you not to change our PE uniforms.

We dislike the ties for boys, the boys are ^{now} using bowties, which is too formal and too mature and old for them. We suggest you should change our bowties into normal ties with our school name printed on it.

The shoes and socks are fine for us, just one thing, we don't really like grey socks much, because grey colour socks are for kindergarden children, we think. We suggest you change the colour of our socks from grey to white.

That is all of our likes and dislikes. We are looking forward to see our new uniform!

Yours faithfully,
Students.

Distance do not write in the margin

Distance do not write in the margin

Annotation

The content is relevant with ideas that are related to the topic and details provided→ the writer likes the current style and colour of the uniform and dislikes the colour of the dress. The writer also mentions that the boys' pants and the jacket for boys and girls are the reason → *'the material of the pants was too thick'*, instead of is too thick and *'the boys felt extremely hot and uncomfortable in summer'* and the jacket material is *'not warm enough'*. Reasons are also given as to why the writer likes the PE uniform→ *'every houses have their own special designed PE uniform tops'* instead of every house has its own specially designed PE uniform top.

A wide range of vocabulary and sentence patterns are used, but there are some simple errors→ in capitalization *'a'* instead of A, *'the'* instead of The. There are some errors in sentence structure→ *'because the jackets for them were not warm enough'* instead of because the jackets were not warm enough for them.

There are also some grammatical errors→ *'we are looking forward to see our new uniform'* instead of we are looking forward to seeing our new uniform.

The format is appropriate. The introduction is relevant and the complimentary close is also correct. It concludes the letter nicely→ *'We are looking forward to see our new uniform! Yours faithfully, Students'*.

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 could express ideas clearly and coherently with substantial supporting details which made their presentation unique and interesting.
- Students were capable of using varied and appropriate language patterns and vocabulary to enrich their presentation.
- They could also speak fluently with few errors in pronunciation and use intonation to enhance their presentation.
- They showed an awareness of their audience by maintaining good eye contact with the oral examiners.

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. They demonstrated a good range of vocabulary and expressed themselves clearly and fluently, with few errors in pronunciation.
- Students could use various strategies for oral communication. They could maintain interaction through a range of communicative strategies, such as posing questions to elicit opinions from other group members by asking “What’s your opinion?”. They also encouraged other members to further elaborate their ideas by saying things like “Please tell us more about...” and consolidated the group’s ideas by saying “so we all agree that...” They were effective group facilitators.

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 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. Generally students could work out the meaning of unfamiliar words and expressions when a simple and familiar context was given.
- Most students were also able to select answers based on contextual clues provided, however there was some difficulty in connecting ideas in a poem.
- Students were able to distinguish a speaker's feelings from the tone of his/her voice, however most were not able to distinguish between a positive, negative or neutral tone.
- Some students found it difficult to predict what could happen in the future to the animal in the poem as they were not certain exactly what kind of animal it was, despite the clues provided in the poem.

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.
- Many students were able to understand the connection between ideas and also locate information to support ideas.
- Some students could distinguish between fact and opinion and also decide whether information had been provided in the text or not.

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 – Article – Keeping and Caring for Pets in Hong Kong)
- Although students could write well-organised paragraphs, few could elaborate on the topic and generally based their comments on the prompts. (Student exemplar #3 – Letter to Principal – New School Uniform)
- 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 – Email to Teacher – Australia Trip Activities)
- On a topic about pets and how to keep and care for them in Hong Kong, 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 – Article – Keeping and Caring for Pets in Hong Kong)
- Capable students wrote better organized passages and could elaborate their ideas giving valid reasons for participating in various activities. (Student exemplar #8 – Email to Teacher – Australia Trip Activities)
- Capable students also wrote quite detailed passages elaborating on their ideas and giving valid reasons for making changes to the school uniform or for keeping some items. (Student exemplar #9 – Letter to Principal – New School Uniform)
- Students, in many instances, misspelled common words and it was evident that proofreading was not being done. It was also evident that some students were hindered by their inability to spell simple vocabulary. (Student exemplar #2 – Email to Teacher – Australia Trip Activities and Student exemplar #3 – Letter to Principal – New School Uniform)

S.3 Speaking

- Students were generally able to use simple language patterns and familiar vocabulary to present their ideas, though difficulties with pronunciation and intonation were noticeable.
- In “Individual Presentation”, students generally expressed adequate ideas that were relevant to the topics. While more capable students made attempts to display an awareness of their audience, some students, however, simply read their presentation.
- Some students confused “neighbourhood” with “neighbour”, “healthy” with “heavy” and “cause” with “case”. Some of them were unfamiliar with some key words and their pronunciation, for example, “environment”, “tutorial”, “charity”, “stress”.
- In “Group Interaction”, students could give short, simple responses to ideas that were relevant to the topics. Their responses were generally brief. Some students did not elaborate on their own ideas or extend an idea further in their discussion.
- Some students lacked interactive strategies. They did not listen and respond to others. They just went on talking about their own ideas without interacting with others.
- 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.
- Many of them were able to use limited formulaic expressions to facilitate their conversation, for example, “I agree with you”, “That is a good idea!” or “What do you think?”

Comparison of Student Performances in English Language at Secondary 3 TSA 2010, 2011 and 2012

The percentage of S.3 students achieving Basic Competency in 2012 was 69.1%. The percentage of students achieving Basic Competency in the last three years is provided in Table 7.19.

Table 7.19 Percentages of S.3 Students Achieving English Language Basic Competency in 2010, 2011 and 2012

Year	% of Students Achieving English Language Basic Competency
2010	69.2
2011	69.2
2012	69.1

A comparison of the strengths and weaknesses of S.3 student performances in TSA 2010, 2011 and 2012 provides useful information on how teachers can help students improve their skills. Table 7.20 summarises such a comparison.

Table 7.20 Comparison of Student Performances in English Language at Secondary 3 TSA 2010, 2011 and 2012

Year Skill	2010	2011	2012
Reading	<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. 	<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. • More than half of the students were able to comprehend and make plausible conclusions about the meaning of unfamiliar expressions using reference skills. • Many students were adept at inference and could also identify details that supported a main idea as well as understand the connection between ideas. • Almost half of the students could understand language features and correctly identify an example of rhyme.

Year Skill	2010	2011	2012
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. 	<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. 	<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 topics such as school life and keeping pets and choosing activities to do on an overseas trip. • 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 ‘firstly’ and ‘secondly’ in writing paragraphs. Paragraphs were generally well-organised with coherent links.

Year Skill	2010	2011	2012
Writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A moderate number of students made errors when using tenses invariably confusing the past and future tenses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. • Misspelling of simple vocabulary affected meaning as well with many not being able to spell simple topic based vocabulary for example names of various animals and also names of items of clothing.

Year Skill	2010	2011	2012
Listening	<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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many students could extract specific information from simple, clear and slower spoken texts. • More than half of the students were also competent in understanding and identifying feelings and emotions in spoken texts. • About half of the students could understand language features and correctly identify an example of rhyme. • Some students were adept at connecting ideas. A considerable number of students could interpret and evaluate information in dialogues using contextual clues. • Almost half of the students could distinguish main ideas from supporting details in a simple poem spoken slowly.

Year Skill	2010	2011	2012
Speaking	<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 would struggle as they lacked the vocabulary to express themselves clearly and also had difficulty pronouncing key vocabulary. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students were generally able to use simple language patterns and familiar vocabulary to present their ideas, though difficulties with pronunciation and intonation were noticeable. • More than half of the students could express adequate ideas that were relevant to the topics in “Individual Presentation” using simple language patterns and vocabulary. • Some students hesitated to the extent that their speech was stilted and difficult for listeners to comprehend.

Year Skill	2010	2011	2012
Speaking	<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?’ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While more capable students made attempts to display an awareness of their audience, some students, however, simply read their presentation. • In “Group Interactions”, students could give short, simple responses to ideas that were relevant to the topics. Some students did not elaborate on their own ideas or extend an idea further in their discussion. • Many of them were able to use limited formulaic expressions to facilitate their conversation, for example, “I agree with you”, “That is a good idea!” or “What do you think?”