

7. ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Results of Primary 3 English Language in TSA 2011

The territory-wide percentage of P.3 students achieving English Language Basic Competency in TSA 2011 is 79.8%. The percentage of students achieving basic competency in 2011 is slightly higher than that of 2010.

Primary 3 Assessment Design

The assessment tasks for TSA 2011 P.3 English Language were based on the *Basic Competency (BC) Descriptors (Tryout Version) for English Language at the end of Key Stage 1 (Primary 3)* and the *CDC Syllabus for English Language (Primary 1 – 6) 1997*. The tasks covered the four language skills of listening, reading, writing and speaking, as well as learning objectives in three interrelated strands, i.e. Interpersonal (IS), Knowledge (KS) and Experience (ES).

The P.3 written assessment consisted of four sub-papers for Listening and four sub-papers for Reading and Writing, comprising a total of 92 items and 104 score points. The duration of each Listening sub-paper was approximately 20 minutes, while each Reading and Writing sub-paper was 25 minutes. The oral assessment consisted of twelve sub-papers. The composition of the P.3 written sub-papers is provided in Table 7.1a and that of Speaking sub-papers is given in Table 7.1b.

Table 7.1a Composition of P.3 Written Sub-papers

Written Assessment				
Basic Competency	No. of Items (Score Points)			
Listening	3EL1	3EL2	3EL3	3EL4
	19(19)	20(20)	20(20)	19(19)
Reading	3ERW1	3ERW2	3ERW3	3ERW4
	26(26)	26(26)	25(25)	25(25)
Writing	3ERW1	3ERW2	3ERW3	3ERW4
	1(7)	1(7)	1(7)	1(7)

Table 7.1b Composition of P.3 Speaking Sub-papers

Speaking Assessment			
Basic Competency	No. of Items (Score Points)		
L2-R-3-P3BC (Reading aloud)	3ES01 & 3ES03 2 (8)	3ES05 & 3ES07 2 (8)	3ES09 & 3ES11 2 (8)
L1-S-3-P3BC (Short answers)	3ES01 – 3ES04 4 (16)	3ES05 – 3ES08 4 (16)	3ES09 – 3ES12 4 (16)
L3-S-1-P3BC (Picture description – pronunciation)	3ES02 & 3ES04 2 (4)	3ES06 & 3ES08 2 (4)	3ES10 & 3ES12 2 (4)

P.3 Listening Items

Each student was required to attempt one of the four sub-papers (about 20 minutes), each of which consisted of two listening tasks. All listening materials were played twice. Descriptions of the listening assessment tasks are provided in Tables 7.2 and 7.3.

Table 7.2 P.3 Listening: Distribution of Items

Basic Competency	Descriptor	No. of Items
L2-L-1-P3BC	Discriminating between common words with a small range of vowel and consonant sounds	5
L2-L-3-P3BC	Using a small range of strategies to understand the meaning of short and simple texts on familiar topics which are delivered slowly and clearly in familiar accents	34
	TOTAL	39

Table 7.3 P.3 Listening: Item Description and Question Types

Basic Competency	Item Description	Question Type	No. of Items (Score Points)
L2-L-3-P3BC	Visiting Grandparents <i>3EL1 / 3EL2 Part 1</i>	Multiple Choice	9(9)
L2-L-1-P3BC L2-L-3-P3BC	Moving House <i>3EL1 / 3EL4 Part 2</i>	Multiple Choice	10(10)
L2-L-1-P3BC L2-L-3-P3BC	Hiking <i>3EL2 / 3EL3 Part 2</i>	Multiple Choice	11(11)
L2-L-1-P3BC L2-L-3-P3BC	Show and Tell <i>3EL3 / 3EL4 Part 1</i>	Multiple Choice	9(9)

P.3 Reading Items

Each student was required to attempt four reading tasks in one of the four Reading and Writing sub-papers (25 minutes each). About 15 minutes was allotted for completion of the reading tasks in each sub-paper. Descriptions of the reading tasks are provided in Tables 7.4 and 7.5.

Table 7.4 P.3 Reading: Distribution of Items

Basic Competency	Descriptor	No. of Items
L2-R-5-P3BC	Using a small range of reading strategies to understand the meaning of short and simple texts with the help of cues	43
L2-R-6-P3BC	Applying a small range of simple reference skills	8
TOTAL		51

Table 7.5 P.3 Reading: Item Description and Question Types

Basic Competency	Item Description	Question Type	No. of Items (Score Points)
L2-R-6-P3BC	Book Cover <i>3ERW1 / 3ERW3 Part 1A</i>	Multiple Choice	3(3)
L2-R-5-P3BC L2-R-6-P3BC	Contents Page <i>3ERW1 / 3ERW3 Part 1B</i>	Multiple Choice	4(4)
L2-R-5-P3BC	Animal Bookmark <i>3ERW1 / 3ERW3 Part 2</i>	Multiple Choice	5(5)
L2-R-5-P3BC	Coupons <i>3ERW1 / 3ERW2 Part 3</i>	Multiple Choice	7(7)
L2-R-5-P3BC	Sports Day <i>3ERW1 / 3ERW4 Part 4</i>	Multiple Choice	7(7)
L2-R-5-P3BC L2-R-6-P3BC	Dictionary Cover <i>3ERW2 / 3ERW4 Part 1</i>	Multiple Choice	5(5)
L2-R-5-P3BC	Birthday Party <i>3ERW2 / 3ERW4 Part 2</i>	Multiple Choice	7(7)
L2-R-5-P3BC	Peanut the Dog <i>3ERW2 / 3ERW3 Part 4</i>	Multiple Choice	7(7)
L2-R-5-P3BC	Keep Healthy <i>3ERW3 / 3ERW4 Part 3</i>	Multiple Choice	6(6)

P.3 Writing Tasks

Each student was required to attempt one writing task in one of the four Reading and Writing sub-papers (25 minutes each). About 10 minutes was allotted for completion of the writing task in each sub-paper. Descriptions of the writing tasks are provided in Tables 7.6 and 7.7.

Table 7.6 P.3 Writing: Distribution of Items

Basic Competency	Descriptor	No. of Items
L2-W-3-P3BC	Writing and/or responding to short and simple texts with relevant information and ideas (including personal experiences and imaginative ideas) with the help of cues	1
L2-W-4-P3BC	Writing short and simple texts using a small range of vocabulary, sentence patterns and cohesive devices fairly appropriately with the help of cues despite some spelling and grammatical mistakes	1
TOTAL		2

Table 7.7 P.3 Writing: Item Description

Basic Competency	Item Description	No. of Items (Score Points)
L2-W-3-P3BC	At the Farm	1/2 (4)
L2-W-4-P3BC	3ERW1 / 3ERW2 Part 5	1/2 (3)
L2-W-3-P3BC	Things I Do at Weekends	1/2 (4)
L2-W-4-P3BC	3ERW3 / 3ERW4 Part 5	1/2 (3)

P.3 Speaking Tasks

Two components were designed for P.3 oral assessment. The first was ‘Reading Aloud and Expression of Personal Experiences’ (hereafter RA & PE) which required students to read aloud a text of approximately 35 – 40 words in length and then to answer a set of questions based on the theme of the text. Students were assessed on their reading fluency and response to the Oral Examiners’ questions. For this task, students were given two minutes to prepare for the assessment, one minute to complete the RA text and two minutes to complete the questions for PE. The second task was ‘Picture Description’ (hereafter PD) which required students to answer the Oral Examiner’s questions based on a single picture or series of smaller pictures. Students were assessed on the relevancy and response to the questions as well as their pronunciation. For PD, students were given three minutes to study the question paper and two minutes to complete the Oral Examiners’ questions.

Each component represented one half of the total sub-papers used for the oral assessment. RA & PE were comprised of sub-papers 3ES01, 3ES03, 3ES05, 3ES07, 3ES09, 3ES011 and PD comprised of 3ES02, 3ES04, 3ES06, 3ES08, 3ES10, 3ES12. A set of three sub-papers (two RA & PE tasks and two PD tasks) were alternately assessed in an assessment session. Sub-papers consisted of different topics: *In Summer* (3ES01), *Helping Others at School* (3ES02), *Eating Out* (3ES03), *In the Library* (3ES04), *My Grandmother* (3ES05), *A Birthday Gift* (3ES06), *My Hobbies* (3ES07), *Crossing the Road* (3ES08), *Reading* (3ES09), *At the Park* (3ES10), *Going to the Market* (3ES11) and *A School Picnic* (3ES12). A total of three sessions were conducted over the 1.5 days of assessment held on 4 and 5 May 2011. Descriptions of the speaking tasks are provided in Table 7.8.

Table 7.8 P.3 Speaking: Distribution of Tasks

Basic Competency	Task Description	Descriptor
L2-R-3-P3BC	Reading Aloud <i>3ES01, 3ES03, 3ES05, 3ES07, 3ES09, 3ES11</i>	Showing a basic understanding of short, simple and familiar texts by reading aloud the texts clearly and comprehensibly
L1-S-3-P3BC	Expression of Personal Experiences <i>3ES01, 3ES03, 3ES05, 3ES07, 3ES09, 3ES11</i>	Providing short answers to short and simple questions
L3-S-1-P3BC	Picture Description <i>3ES02, 3ES04, 3ES06, 3ES08, 3ES10, 3ES12</i>	Pronouncing simple and familiar words comprehensibly
L1-S-3-P3BC		Providing short answers to short and simple questions

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

P.3 Listening

Students with minimally acceptable levels of basic competence were able to identify key words with given spoken cues. They were able to connect ideas by identifying a small range of cohesive devices. They could also distinguish basic differences in intonation and discriminate between common words with a small range of vowel and consonant sounds.

Key Words

- Most students at this level were able to identify key words which were delivered slowly and clearly in the spoken texts. They could identify ‘Superboy’ was a kind of computer game that Jimmy liked to play when they heard ‘Today I want to show you my favourite game. It’s a computer game called “Superboy”.’ (3EL3 / 3EL4 Part 1 ‘Show and Tell’ Q.1). They could also identify that ‘Superboy’ helped poor people when they heard ‘Superboy is a very good person...He helps poor and weak people.’ (3EL3 / 3EL4 Part 1 ‘Show and Tell’ Q.4). When students listened to a conversation about hiking, they were able to identify key words about the duration of hiking in the spoken text even with distractors built in, ‘Do you hike for a long time, three or four hours?... ‘Oh, no, I hike for about two hours.’ (3EL2 / 3EL3 Part 2 ‘Hiking’ Q.8). They could also identify that Jimmy would go hiking on Saturdays and he would bring two bottles of water with him when they heard ‘I hike every Saturday...I bring two bottles of water...’ in the spoken text (3EL2 / 3EL3 Part 2 ‘Hiking’ Q.1 & Q.9).
- The majority of students could also identify key words that they were familiar with – means of transport and time. They were able to identify ‘tram’ as the public transport that Mary took to go home (3EL1 / 3EL4 Part 2 ‘Moving House’ Q.5) and when Mary moved to a new flat – ‘last week’ (3EL1 / 3EL4 Part 2 ‘Moving House’ Q.1). They were able to get the correct answer with straightforward verbal cues given. They could identify the time spent by Tom and Judy to travel to see their grandparents when they heard ‘It took Tom and Judy one hour and thirty minutes to get to the farm.’ (3EL1 / 3EL2 Part 1 ‘Visiting Grandparents’ Q.2). They could also identify the bus stop as the place where Grandpa met Tom and Judy when they heard ‘Grandpa met them at the bus stop.’ (3EL1 / 3EL2 Part 1 ‘Visiting Grandparents’ Q.4). When asked where Mary took the photos she showed her class, students were

able to identify Japan upon hearing ‘We visited Happy Park in Japan and took these photos.’ in the spoken text (3EL3 / 3EL4 Part 1 ‘Show and Tell’ Q.5).

- Many students were capable of identifying key words which were related to their daily life experiences such as food. They could identify the food that Jimmy brought when going hiking – ‘bread’ (3EL2 / 3EL3 Part 2 ‘Hiking’ Q.10).

Connection between Ideas

- Most students were able to understand the connection between ideas using ‘and’. They could identify the correct picture of the big flowers and tall grass with the verbal cues ‘I can see big flowers and long grass.’ (3EL2 / 3EL3 Part 2 ‘Hiking’ Q.4). They were also able to identify the picture of Mary’s cousin, showing an understanding of the connection between ideas in the spoken texts, ‘She has very long hair and wears glasses.’ (3EL3 / 3EL4 Part 1 ‘Show and Tell’ Q.8). When asked who went hiking with Jimmy, students were able to identify Jimmy’s parents and sister as the people who went hiking with Jimmy when they heard ‘Who hikes with you?’ ‘My parents and my sister.’ (3EL2 / 3EL3 Part 2 ‘Hiking’ Q.5). Students were also able to identify the picture of a chicken and some vegetables as the food for lunch when they heard ‘Grandma cooked a chicken and fresh vegetables from her garden for lunch.’ (3EL1 / 3EL2 Part 1 ‘Visiting Grandparents’ Q.5).
- With the help of pictorial cues, most students could identify the connection between ideas. When asked which ride Mary was on in Happy Park, students could correctly identify the correct picture of ‘Bump Bump Tea Cups’ among other distractors ‘Beep Beep Fast Car’, ‘Fun Fun Boat Ride’, ‘Toot Toot Train Ride’ by interpreting ‘...there are lots of fun rides like “Beep Beep Fast Car”...I was on my favourite ride “Bump Bump Tea Cups”. It made me turn round and round.’ (3EL3 / 3EL4 Part 1 ‘Show and Tell’ Q.6).
- Students at this level showed their understanding of the connection between ideas linked by the cohesive device ‘or’. When they heard ‘I hike every Saturday. But I don’t go hiking when it’s raining or when it’s too hot’, they were able to choose the picture of rainy and hot weather to mean that Jimmy would not go hiking in such weather conditions (3EL2 / 3EL3 Part 2 ‘Hiking’ Q.2).
- Many students were also capable of understanding the connection between two or more ideas implicitly linked. They could identify the picture of a farm at the bottom of a mountain as the place where Grandpa and Grandma lived after listening to the

spoken text, 'Tom and his big sister, Judy, lived in the city. One day, they went to visit their grandparents. Grandpa and Grandma lived on a farm at the bottom of a mountain.' (3EL1 / 3EL2 Part 1 'Visiting Grandparents' Q.1).

Intonation

- Most students showed their ability in distinguishing speakers' tones when expressing happiness, sadness and excitement. They were able to identify the happy and excited tone of Jimmy when he played computer games by interpreting 'Well, I like this game because it's fun and easy to play. I always win!' (3EL3 / 3EL4 Part 1 'Show and Tell' Q.3). They could also identify that Tom and Judy were sad when they said goodbye to their grandparents upon hearing 'Goodbye, Grandpa and Grandma! We'll miss you,' (3EL1 / 3EL2 Part 1 'Visiting Grandparents' Q.9). They could also interpret Tom and Judy were happy when they heard them saying 'What a nice day!' (3EL1 / 3EL2 Part 1 'Visiting Grandparents' Q.6). Students were capable of identifying the excited tone of Mary's voice when she said, 'My parents are inviting all our friends to our new home next Sunday. Come and join us!' (3EL1 / 3EL4 Part 2 'Moving House' Q.9).

Sounds

- Most students could distinguish names of people and a mountain with different initial consonants. They could distinguish names of boys and girls. They could distinguish 'Jerry' from 'Terry', 'Kerry' and 'Harry' (3EL1 / 3EL4 Part 2 'Moving House' Q.8) and 'Candy' from 'Wendy', 'Mandy' and 'Sandy' (3EL3 / 3EL4 Part 1 'Show and Tell' Q.7). When asked where Jimmy went hiking, they could distinguish 'S' in 'Sunny Mountain' from 'B' in 'Bunny Mountain', 'F' in 'Funny Mountain' and 'H' in 'Hunny Mountain' (3EL2 / 3EL3 Part 2 'Hiking' Q.3). Most students at this level could distinguish numbers as well. They could distinguish '95' from '55', '59' and '99' (3EL1 / 3EL4 Part 2 'Moving House' Q.4).

P.3 Reading

Students with minimally acceptable levels of basic competence were able to identify key words with the help of contextual clues. They could identify the connection between ideas with pictorial cues and cohesive devices. Students were capable of applying a small range of simple reference skills to obtain information from book covers and the contents page. They could also follow pronoun references and predict content with the help of pictorial cues and contextual clues. Students also demonstrated that they were able to interpret unfamiliar words using contextual clues.

Key Words

- Most students could identify the key words in the reading texts when straightforward contextual clues were given. They were able to identify the date of Peter's birthday party (i.e. 21st May) on a card (3ERW2 / 3ERW4 Part 2 'Birthday Party' Q.2). When asked what Peter could eat at the party, students at this level were able to identify the picture of 'pizzas' as the correct answer by locating the word 'pizza' in the card (3ERW2 / 3ERW4 Part 2 'Birthday Party' Q.5). When reading the instructions on how to make an animal bookmark, students could identify the picture of a pair of scissors as the tool for cutting out the picture to match with the contextual clue, 'Cut out the animal with the scissors.' (3ERW1 / 3ERW3 Part 2 'Animal Bookmark' Q.4).
- The majority of students could match the correct picture with the key words identified. They were able to identify the picture of John and Peter running with the contextual clue, 'John goes running with Peter every day.' (3ERW1 / 3ERW4 Part 4 'Sports Day' Q.1). They were also able to identify the picture of John jumping up happily with the contextual clue, 'John gets a medal from the headmistress...John jumps with joy!' (3ERW1 / 3ERW4 Part 4 'Sports Day' Q.7). They could also identify the starting time of Peter's birthday in a card by reading 'Time: 11 a.m. – 4 p.m.' (3ERW2 / 3ERW4 Part 2 'Birthday Party' Q.4).
- Many students were able to identify key words in the coupons of a bookstore and a children's magazine with both contextual clues and pictorial cues. When reading a coupon of ABC Bookstore, students were able to identify the amount of money (i.e. \$100) that Sam had to pay if he wanted to buy three *Happy Reader* books with the help of pictorial cues (3ERW1 / 3ERW2 Part 3 'Coupons' Q.4). They were also capable of identifying the name of the bookstore – Wan Chai Bookstore – where Sam

could use the coupon with the contextual clue, ‘Use this coupon at ABC Bookstore in Wan Chai.’ (3ERW1 / 3ERW2 Part 3 ‘Coupons’ Q.3). Students could also identify key words in the coupon of Children’s Monthly Magazine (CMM). They were able to identify ‘January’ as the time when Sam could use the CMM coupon (3ERW1 / 3ERW2 Part 3 ‘Coupons’ Q.7). With the help of pictorial cues, many students could identify the number of copies of CMM that Sam could get when he paid \$90 (3ERW1 / 3ERW2 Part 3 ‘Coupons’ Q.6).

- With the help of straightforward contextual clues, many students were able to identify key words related to places. When asked about the venue of Peter’s birthday party, students were able to identify ‘Fun Fun Holiday Centre’ as the correct answer with the contextual clue, ‘Place: Fun Fun Holiday Centre’ on the invitation card (3ERW2 / 3ERW4 Part 2 ‘Birthday Party’ Q.3).

Connection between Ideas

- Many students were able to identify the connection between ideas with the help of the cohesive device ‘between...and’. They could understand the connection of ideas presented in coupons. Based on the contextual clue, ‘Use this coupon between 4th and 18th April, 2011.’ in the ABC Bookstore coupon, students were able to identify the date that Sam could use the coupon – 16th April, 2011 (3ERW1 / 3ERW2 Part 3 ‘Coupons’ Q.5).

Reference Skills

- The majority of students were able to identify information from the dictionary cover. They could identify Susan Law as the illustrator of the dictionary (3ERW2 / 3ERW4 Part 1 ‘Dictionary Cover’ Q.2) and ‘Young Children’s Picture Dictionary’ as the title of the dictionary (3ERW2 / 3ERW4 Part 1 ‘Dictionary Cover’ Q.1). Students were also able to locate the information at the bottom right-hand corner of the dictionary cover to indicate that the dictionary is for children from four to six years old (3ERW2 / 3ERW4 Part 1 ‘Dictionary Cover’ Q.5). Students were also able to obtain information from the contents page of a book. They could identify that there were altogether four chapters in that book (3ERW1 / 3ERW3 Part 1B ‘Contents Page’ Q.1).

Predicting Content

- The performance of students in this area is better than that of last year. The majority of students could deduce meaning from the contents page of a book. When asked where Sam could see the picture of children playing in a school playground, students were able to identify Chapter Four '*In the Playground*' as the correct answer (3ERW1 / 3ERW3 Part 1B '*Contents Page*' Q.3).
- By reading the contents page of a book, many students were able to predict the content of a page in the book. They could deduce that when they read page 2, they could read about Mary's computer lessons (3ERW1 / 3ERW3 Part 1B '*Contents Page*' Q.4).

Reference Words

- There was improvement in this area when compared to last year. Many students could also identify reference words such as 'They' and 'I'. Students were able to correctly interpret the pronoun which was close to the subject it referred to. Students understood that 'They' referred to 'John and Peter' when they read 'John and Peter are in the running race. They are waiting at the starting line.' in the story (3ERW1 / 3ERW4 Part 4 '*Sports Day*' Q.2). Students also demonstrated their ability in interpreting reference words. They could interpret correctly the pronoun 'I' in the sentence 'I ran to the dog ...' as the sender of the letter – Sam (3ERW2 / 3ERW3 Part 4 '*Peanut the Dog*' Q.3).

Unfamiliar Words

- Students showed progress in this area this year. The majority of students were able to interpret the meaning of unfamiliar words with the help of more than one contextual clue. When asked what the animal doctor did to the dog, students were able to identify the correct picture by interpreting the unfamiliar words 'put medicine' with the help of contextual clues 'animal doctor' and 'on the dog's leg' (3ERW2 / 3ERW3 Part 4 '*Peanut the Dog*' Q.5).

P.3 Writing

Students were required to complete one writing task of about 30 words. Students with minimally acceptable levels of basic competence generally understood the task requirements and could provide relevant ideas. In terms of content, students were generally able to provide a factual account of the story based on the pictures with almost no supporting details in *3ERW1* / *3ERW2*. Students could provide brief and relevant ideas to the prompts in *3ERW3* / *3ERW4*. In terms of language, some students at this level were able to use a small range of vocabulary, sentence patterns and/or cohesive devices fairly appropriately, with some grammatical and spelling mistakes.

At the Farm (3ERW1 / 3ERW2 Part 5)

In this writing task, students were asked to write a story about a visit to the Happy Farm based on the given pictures.

Part 5

Sam goes to a farm with his parents.

You are Sam. Look at the pictures and write the story in about 30 words.

- You may use the words in the boxes to help you.
- What happens in the end? Finish the story.

go

look at

strawberries

watermelons

throw stones

I

END OF PAPER

Student Exemplar 1

I am Sam. Today I and my parents are go to Happy Farm play. I see corn, carrots, strawberries and watermelons, I go to the pond. I see two people throw the stones in the pond. I say 'You do not put the stones in the pond.' Two say 'I like to throw the stones in the pond.' The duck is scared. The duck scared away.

Annotation

- Student is able to provide a factual account of the story based on the pictorial cues, with almost no supporting details (“...I and my parents are go to Happy Farm play...I see two people throw the stones...the duck is scared.”). The description is quite clear and an ending is provided (“The duck scared away.”).
- Student uses a small range of vocabulary (“scared”, “see”) and only one cohesive device is used (“and”) with some grammatical mistakes (“Today I and my parents are go to Happy Farm play.”, “Two say”, ‘I like to put throw the stones in the pond.’”)

Student Exemplar 2

I and family go to Happy Farm. I look at the corn, the carrots, the strawberries and the watermelons.
I go to the pond, I see the boy and the girl throw stones the bucks. I said "They mustn't throw stones the bucks in the Pond." father go to the pond said "They mustn't throw stones the bucks because The bucks are cute"

Annotation

- Student is able to provide a factual account of the story based on the pictures, with one supporting detail ("I look at the corn, the carrots, the strawberries and the watermelons...", "I said "They mustn't throw stones the bucks in the Pond.""). The description is quite clear. An ending to the story is provided ("father go to the pond said "They mustn't throw stones the bucks beacuse The buck are cute").
- Student uses a small range of vocabulary ("mustn't", "cute"), sentence patterns ("I go to the pond, I see the boy and the girl throw stones the bucks.") and cohesive devices ("and", "because") fairly appropriately, with some grammatical ("I and family go to Happy Farm.", "They mustn't throw stones the bucks beacuse The buck are cute") and spelling mistakes ("gril", "bucks", "beacuse").

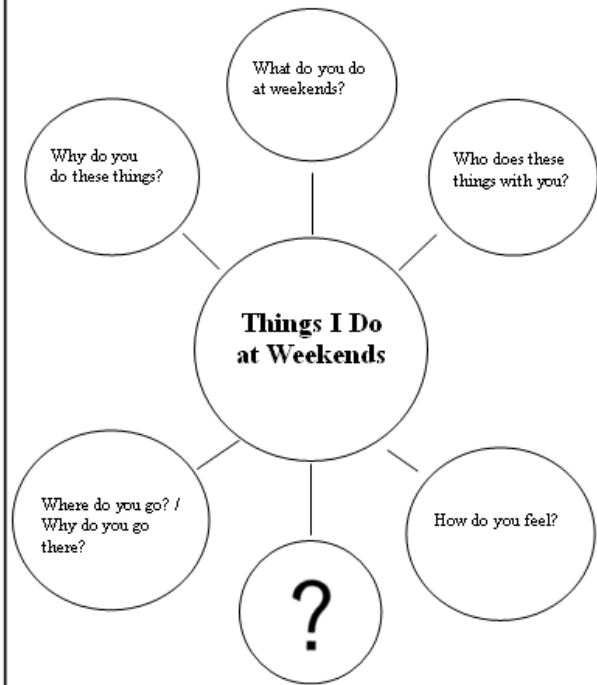
Things I Do at Weekends (3ERW3 / 3ERW4 Part 5)

Part 5

You are writing about things that you do at weekends.

Write about 30 words.

You may use your own ideas or the following questions to help you:



I

END OF PAPER

In this writing task, students were asked to write about the things that they do at weekends with the help of prompts.

Student Exemplar 3

I do exercise with my brother in the morning at weekends. He these things with me because he likes me. I go to my bedroom to do exercise because exercise is fun. I like it. I feel happy.

Annotation

- Student is able to provide brief and relevant ideas/responses to the questions ("I do exercise with my brother in the morning at weekends.", "I go to my bedroom to do exercise because exercise is fun."). The ideas are quite clear.
- Student uses a small range of sentence patterns ("He these things with me because he likes me.", "I like it" and "I feel happy.") fairly appropriately.

Student Exemplar 4

I go to the library at weekends.
I go there with my mother and
sister. I read books there. My sister
don't like there because she cannot
play games. I'm very happy at weekends.

Annotation

- Student is able to provide brief and relevant ideas/responses to the questions (“I go to the library at weekends. I go there with my mother and sister. I read books there.”) The ideas are quite clear.
- Student uses a small range of vocabulary (“library”, “games”), sentence patterns (“My sister don't like there because she cannot play games.”) and cohesive devices (“because”) fairly appropriately.

P.3 Speaking

Depending on the size of the school, a sample of either 12 or 24 students were randomly selected to participate in the oral assessment. No attempt was made to report results for schools in terms of the percent achieving basic competency in speaking because of the small sample size. However, a descriptive summary of the overall performance levels of students can be found in the ‘General Comments on P.3 Student Performances’ section.

Best performance of P.3 Students in TSA 2011

P.3 Listening

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

Connection between Ideas

- More able students could identify the connection of ideas which were not familiar to them in spoken texts. Students could identify that Jimmy liked hiking because ‘it is free’ by interpreting ‘I like hiking because I don’t have to pay to walk in the hills’ (3EL2 / 3EL3 Part 2 ‘Hiking’ Q.7).

P.3 Reading

Students with the best performance did well in the following areas.

Connection between Ideas

- Students could identify the connection between ideas with the help of the cohesive device ‘and’ in a coupon and a story. When asked the number of sandwiches that Sam could get when he used the Rainbow Fast Food coupon to buy two sandwiches, students understood that Sam could get a total of three sandwiches by interpreting ‘Buy two sandwiches and get one free.’ (3ERW1 / 3ERW2 Part 3 ‘Coupons’ Q.1). In reading a story, students were asked what John did when he was at the starting line. They could identify the picture of John with a nervous look and his legs were shaking as the correct answer by interpreting ‘He is very nervous and his legs are shaking.’ (3ERW1 / 3ERW4 Part 4 ‘Sports Day’ Q.3).
- Capable students could understand the implicit connection of two or more ideas. They were asked the reason for Sam being happy. They could identify that Sam was happy because his mum let him keep the dog by interpreting the contextual clue, ‘I wanted it as my pet. My mum let me keep it. I was very happy.’ (3ERW2 / 3ERW3 Part 4 ‘Peanut the Dog’ Q.6).
- Students were able to identify the connection of ideas in a poem with familiar topic – ‘keep healthy’. Even though the ideas in the poem were not linked up with cohesive devices, students could still read between the lines. They could identify that the author wanted the reader to take a good rest after a long day by reading the last stanza of the poem:

‘Don’t play too many computer games,
Go to bed early after a long day,
Take care of yourself and get good rest,
Enjoy your work and play.’
(3ERW3 / 3ERW4 Part 3 ‘Keep Healthy’ Q.6).

- Students could understand the connection of ideas in instructions. After reading the procedures in making an animal bookmark, students were asked what Sam should do after making a hole in the picture. They could choose ‘puts the ribbon through the hole’ as the correct answer by interpreting steps 4 and 5:

4. Make a small hole at the top of the animal.

5. Put the ribbon through the hole and tie it.

(3ERW1 / 3ERW3 Part 2 ‘Animal Bookmark’ Q.5)

Reference Words

- Students could follow pronoun reference in which the pronoun referred to more than one person. When asked what the pronoun ‘We’ referred to in the story, students could interpret that ‘We’ referred to ‘Sam and his mum’ when they read ‘My mum and I gave the dog a name. We called it Peanut...’ (3ERW2 / 3ERW3 Part 4 ‘Peanut the Dog’ Q.7).

Unfamiliar Words

- With the help of contextual clues in the story, students were able to interpret the meaning of unfamiliar words correctly. They could interpret that people shouted happily when John won the race with the help of the contextual clue, ‘all the people cheer loudly!’ (3ERW1 / 3ERW4 Part 4 ‘Sports Day’ Q.5).

P.3 Writing

Students with good writing skills were able to provide a/an logical/interesting/imaginative story based on pictures with many supporting details in *3ERW1 / 3ERW2*. Students could provide relevant ideas with many supporting details or examples based on the prompts in *3ERW3 / 3ERW4*. The ideas were well organised and coherent. In terms of language, students at this level were able to use a range of vocabulary, sentence patterns and cohesive devices appropriately with minor, few or no grammatical and spelling mistakes.

Student Exemplar 5

I went to Happy Farm with my parents on a sunny Saturday morning. We took a train from the MTR Station and arrived there.

First, we went to the farm to look at the crops. We saw corn, carrots, (at) strawberries and watermelons. They all looked fresh and tasty.

Then, we went to the Pond. There, I saw two naughty children throwing rocks to the ducks and trying to hurt them. I ran over and told them that their actions were wrong. They stopped throwing rocks at the birds and apologized to me.

When Mum and Dad saw me teaching the other children not to injure the birds, they walked over and praised me for being very brave. I was very joyful the whole day.

Annotation

- Student is able to write an interesting story based on pictorial prompts with many supporting details (“We took a train from the MTR Station and arrived there.”, “They all looked fresh and tasty.”, “I ran over and told them that their actions were wrong.”) The description is very clear and coherent. A good ending is given to the story (“I was very joyful the whole day.”).
- Student uses a range of vocabulary (“sunny”, “fresh”, “naughty”, “actions”, “apologized”, “praised”), sentence patterns (“There, I saw two naughty children throwing rocks to the ducks and trying to hurt them.”, “...they walked over and praised me for being very brave.”) and cohesive devices (“First”, “Then”) appropriately.

Student Exemplar 6

I went to Happy farm last Sunday, I saw something so funny. That day, I first went to see the plants, there are delicious carrots, yellow corn and juicy strawberries. Then, we went to see the pond.

When we were looking the little ducks. Two bad visitors came, one of them took a huge rock and threw it in the pond, another followed him.

"Splash! Splash!" The rocks fell in the water. It didn't hit the lovely little ducks, when they went near the pond to see the ducks, the two visitors had fallen in the pond!

I laughed so much that I almost rolled on the ground. The keeper pulled them up and the visitors promised he won't do it again.

Annotation

- Student writes an interesting story based on the pictures, with many supporting details (e.g. "I went to Happy farm last Sunday, I saw something so funny.", "I laughed so much that I almost rolled on the ground."). The student provides an interesting ending to the story ("The keeper pulled them up and the visitors promised he won't do it again."). The description is very clear and coherent.
- Student uses a range of vocabulary ("delicious carrots", "juicy strawberries", "huge rock", "visitors"), sentence patterns ("It didn't hit the lovely little ducks, when they went near the pond to see the ducks, the two visitors had fallen in the pond!") and cohesive devices ("Then", "When") appropriately.

Things I Do at Weekends (3ERW3 / 3ERW4 Part 5)

Student Exemplar 7

I will ~~go~~ swiming, running, hiking or doing exercise at weekend because these all thing are good for helf. In the morning, I will ~~go~~ swiming and doing exercise. After that, I will eat my lunch, a while later, I go to the peak and hiking, after I walk a while, there have a big park, I like to play there very much. There have a store too! At night, my Mum cooking for the dinner. She is very good at cooking. The food are yummy. At the end, I will watch some cartoon with my family. I feel very delighted, because I will be very strong.

Annotation

- Student is able to provide relevant ideas/responses to the questions with many supporting details or examples. ("I will go swiming, running, hiking or doing exercise at weekend because these all thing are good for helf.", "At night, my Mum cooking for the dinner. She is very good at cooking. The food are yummy.", "I feel very delighted because I will be very strong."). The ideas are very clear and coherent.
- Student uses a range of vocabulary ("doing exercise", "store", "yummy", "cartoon", "delighted"), sentence patterns ("After that, I will eat my lunch, a while later, I go to the peak and hiking...") and cohesive devices appropriately ("After that", "a while later", "At the end", "because") with few grammatical ("...there have a big park.", "There have a store...") and spelling ("helf", "swiming") mistakes.

Student Exemplar 8

I always go to visit grandma and grandpa at weekends in the morning. Then we will go to Yummy fast food to have breakfast. After that my grandparents will go home and I will wait for my friend at Sun Shopping Center. We will buy some sweets or ice-cream to eat if we want, then we will shop for clothes to buy. When it is two o'clock in the afternoon I will go to have lunch with my sister. At night, my parents and my sister will bring me to eat dinner. We are always happy at weekends.

Annotation

- Student is able to provide relevant ideas/responses to the questions with many supporting details or examples. ("I always go to visit grandma and grandpa at weekends in the morning.", "Then we will go to Yummy fast food to have breakfast.", "After that my grandparents will go home and I will wait for my friend at Sun Shopping Center."). The ideas are very clear and coherent.
- Student uses a range of vocabulary ("wait for", "shop for clothes", "have lunch with my sister"), sentence patterns ("We will buy some sweets or ice-cream to eat if we want, then we will shop for clothes to buy.", "When it is two o'clock in the afternoon I will go to have lunch with my sister." "We are always happy at weekends.") and cohesive devices ("Then", "After that") appropriately.

P.3 Speaking

Students with the best performance demonstrated competence in the following areas:

- In the 'Reading Aloud' component, students who performed well were able to read the texts fluently and clearly with appropriate pausing and intonation. They made very few or no mistakes in pronunciation when reading words such as 'best' (*3ES01* & *3ES09*), 'sixty' (*3ES05*) and 'takes' (*3ES11*). They also made attempts to display an awareness of their audience using appropriate eye contact with the oral examiners.
- In the 'Expression of Personal Experiences' component, students with the best performance could provide relevant answers to most of the questions naturally and readily with some elaboration. They were able to give information about their personal experiences related to given topics. They could talk about the activities they do in summer (*3ES01*) and their experiences in visiting friends (*3ES05*).
- In the 'Picture Description' component, students with the best performance were able to give a clear description of what they saw in the pictures. They spoke clearly and readily with very few pronunciation mistakes. Their answers to most of the questions were relevant with some elaborated responses. They could answer 'Why/Why not' questions naturally and readily.

General Comments on P.3 Student Performances

P.3 Listening

- Students performed well at identifying key words. When straightforward verbal cues were given, students were generally able to identify key words in spoken texts. For example, 'computer', 'poor people' and 'two hours'. They were able to identify a wide range of key words on familiar topics, including transport (e.g. tram), duration (e.g. one hour thirty minutes), places (e.g. bus stop) and country (e.g. Japan). Students were able to identify key words related to their daily life experiences such as food (e.g. bread).
- Students also showed understanding of a speaker's tone of voice. They were generally capable of distinguishing different feelings (e.g. happy, sad and excited) of speakers from their tones when they said, 'I always win!', 'We'll miss you', 'What a nice day!' and 'Come and join us!'
- Students performed well in discriminating initial consonants. They could distinguish 'Sunny' from 'Bunny', 'Funny' and 'Hunny', 'Jerry' from 'Terry', 'Kerry' and 'Harry' as well as 'Candy' from 'Wendy', 'Mandy' and 'Sandy'. Students could distinguish number. They could distinguish '95' from '55', '59' and '99'.
- Students were generally able to identify the connection between ideas which were explicitly linked by 'and' and 'or'. It was found that pictorial cues were also crucial to students' understanding of the connection between ideas, no matter whether the ideas were linked explicitly or implicitly. However, when the ideas were not familiar to students, even though the ideas were explicitly linked up by the cohesive device 'because', only the more able students were able to get the correct answer.

P.3 Reading

- As in the last year, students were able to identify key words with straightforward contextual clues. They were able to identify key words related to date, time, places, amount of money, number of magazine, etc. They could also get the correct answer with the help of pictorial cues. They could match the pictures of food, activity, stationery as well as emotions with the key words identified in the reading texts.
- Students were generally able to work out the connection between ideas with cohesive devices such as 'between...and...'. However, fewer students were able to identify the connection between ideas which they were not familiar with, e.g. 'Buy two sandwiches and get one free', 'He is very nervous and his legs are shaking'. It was also found that only the more able students were able to identify the implicit connection of two or more ideas when reading a longer text (e.g. story, poem) or instructions.
- Students performed well in obtaining information on a contents page. When reading the contents page of a book, they were able to correctly obtain information about the total number of chapters in the book. Not only could they obtain information from the contents page, they could identify information on a dictionary cover, including the title, the illustrator and the target readers.
- When given contextual clues in the contents page, many students were able to deduce the contents of different chapters in the book.
- When the pronoun was close to the subject it referred to, students could identify what the pronoun referred to correctly. For example, students were able to identify the pronoun 'They' referring to 'John and Peter' when these two pieces of information were put close together in the story. Even when the pronouns were not close to the subjects they referred to, students also showed their ability to follow pronoun reference in a letter. When asked what the pronoun 'I' referred to in the letter, students showed that they could follow pronoun reference and knew that 'I' referred to 'Sam', the sender of the letter.
- Some students could interpret the meaning of unfamiliar words with the help of more than one contextual clue. However, when only one contextual clue was given, only the more able students were able to make use of the clue to interpret meaning of the unfamiliar words.

P.3 Writing

- In the writing task ‘At the Farm’, students were given a word prompt for each of the three pictures and were asked to write a story. They had to interpret the pictures and write a story about the visit to Happy Farm. They were also asked to provide an ending to the story. Students were generally able to write a factual account of the story with an ending, though not many supporting details were given. The description of the story was quite clear.
- In the writing task ‘Things I Do at Weekends’, students were asked to write about what they do during weekends. Prompts were given to help students to write: ‘What do you do at weekends?’, ‘Who does these things with you?’, ‘Why do you do these things?’, ‘Where do you go?/Why do you go there?’, and ‘How do you feel?’. Students were able to respond to the questions with brief but relevant answers. The ideas were quite clear and were well organized.
- The performances of students in the two writing tasks are summarized below.

At the Farm

- For content, students were able to write a short story about the visit to Happy Farm based on the given pictures. Students generally were able to provide a factual account of the story based on pictorial cues with a clear storyline. They were able to write about items that they saw in the pictures, including the name of the farm, the weather, the clothes Sam and his parents wore, the things that they brought with them and the things they saw on the farm. Brief but relevant ideas of the story are commonly found in students’ writing. For example, ‘I went to Happy Farm with Dad and Mom last Saturday, the wheather was sunny.’, ‘...the weather was hot, so we wear hats and sunglasses.’, ‘Dad bring water. Mom and I bring a bag’, ‘We look at the corn, carrots, strawberries, watermelons.’ They could also write brief ideas about what happened near the pond: ‘I can see the boy and girl throw stones.’, ‘I am angry, I said “you not no throw stones.”’, ‘The children have listen and say “sorry” to the ducks.’ The story was brief with almost no supporting details.
- In general, some students were able to make use of the word prompts as well as the vocabulary given in the pictures to write a story. The content of the story was richer than before. However, some students mistook ‘the pond’ as ‘chicken house’, ‘ducks’ as ‘chickens’, ‘goose’ and ‘fish’.

- Same as last year, some students were able to include short conversation exchanges between Sam and the children, Sam and his parents, Sam and the staff of the farm in the story, e.g. 'Mom say "The vegetable is very beautiful!"', "'It look like yummy, said Sam's father.'", 'I say, "don't hurt the animals, please."', 'Hay! Stop throwing, the ducks were getting hurt!' I shouted to them.', 'Don't throw stones into the pond.'. This made the story more vivid and interesting. However, some students used the wrong punctuation marks 「 」 for writing conversation exchanges, e.g. 'I say:「you not throw stones.」 '. Some even did not put in any punctuation marks in the sentences which might affect the communication of ideas. For example, 'I say don't throw stones to fish the fish is sarend.'
- Most students were able to provide a very brief ending to the story, though without much elaboration: 'At last, they go home by bus happy.', 'At last, the worker were very angry that he scold them.', 'Soon we brought the watermelons home', 'I go and scold them. They stop. At last I told my mum and dad. They said I am a good boy.', 'The police arrested them. The ducks were safe.' However, few students were able to provide a story with imaginative ideas.
- Students were able to use vocabulary related to the topic. The vocabulary commonly used were 'happy', 'look at', 'photo', 'beautiful', 'throw stones', 'angry', 'hurt', 'sorry', and 'go home'. Students wrote short and simple sentences in the story, e.g. 'I went to Happy Farm last week.', 'I see corn, carrots, strawberries and watermelons. I go to the pond.', 'I see some peoples throw stones', 'I say "Don't throw the stones boys!"', 'They say "sorry" and don't throw the stones in the pond. I feel very happy.'
- Some students were able to use cohesive devices to link up ideas. They were able to use cohesive devices such as 'and', 'first', 'next', 'but', 'then', 'so', and 'at last'. For example, 'I go to the Happy farm with my mum and my dad.', 'First, we look at the plants...Next, I go to the pond.', 'But they do not listen to me...Then I talk to Dad...So they ran out to Happy Farm', 'At last, we went back home. What a happy day!'.
- Grammatical mistakes were common among students. Some of them made errors when using the simple past tense and simple present tense, e.g. 'I goes to Happy Farm.', 'I am go to Happy Farm.', 'I with my dad and mum go to Happy Farm.', 'I am exciting.', 'There have corn, watermelons...', 'There had two children...', 'I don't found Mum and Dad', 'I saw some kids are throwing stones', 'I can saw two chicken

threw some stone in the pond', 'I go to Chicken House look at', 'You are don't throw stones in the pond', 'The duck will unhappy.', 'He don't listen.', 'We went to home.', 'They not happy and angry.', 'Then the parents is come.', 'I look at watermelons and strawberries is very yummy'. Students also had problems in using 'the' when they wrote 'I go to pond to see the duck' instead of 'I go to the pond to see the duck'. Students also had difficulty in using the pronouns correctly, e.g. 'We look at they', 'They say "I am sorry."'. Students did not use the correct prepositions. For example, students wrote 'Don't throw stones to the ducks' or 'I throw stones with the ducks' instead of 'at the ducks'.

- Students also misspelled common words: 'gril', 'girt', 'gris' for 'girl', 'mather' for 'mother', 'fother' for 'father', 'buck', 'drak', 'drick', 'dinrks' for 'duck', 'frist' for 'first', 'fram' for 'farm', 'chicken', 'chired', 'chirdren' for 'children', 'pand', 'pound', 'pood', 'pool' for 'pond', 'poto' for 'photo', 'beause', 'becase' for 'because', 'beaitful', 'beautful' for 'beautiful', 'shorry' for 'sorry'. Some misspelled words even changed the meaning of the story, e.g. 'shop' for 'stop', 'short' for 'shout', 'hunt' for 'hurt', 'hungry' for 'angry', 'think' for 'thing', 'take' for 'talk', 'cup' for 'cap'.
- A small number of students were able to provide relevant ideas to the topic with elaboration of their ideas. They could write well-organised paragraphs and provide some supporting details: 'I go to Happy Farm today, it is a sunny day, I am excited.', 'We saw corn, carrots, strawberries and watermelons. They all looked fresh and tasty', 'Mum took pictures of the carrots while I spent time looking at the strawberries and the watermelons – I rarely see them in the soil!'
- Some capable students could provide conversation exchanges with good ideas: 'I says "Don't throw stones on the ducks, if you were the ducks and someone throw stones on you, how do you feel!"'. They also provided a good ending to the story with details: 'When Mum and Dad saw me teaching the other children not to injure the birds, they walked over and praised me for being very brave. I was very joyful the whole day.', '...the two visitors had fallen in the pond! I laughed so much that I almost rolled on the ground. The keeper pulled them up and the visitors promised he won't do it again'.
- A wide range of vocabulary and sentence patterns were used by more able students. For example, "'Splash! Splash!'" The rocks fell in the water. It didn't hit the lovely little ducks...', 'I was just wanting to play with the ducks when a gang of rowdy children came, armed with stones.'. Students also used cohesive devices such as

‘because’, ‘while’, ‘so’, ‘suddenly’, ‘then’, ‘At once’, ‘also’ to link up ideas and make the story clearer and more coherent.

Things I Do at Weekends

- Most students were able to write about what they usually do at weekends with the help of given prompts. Only a small number of students responded to the question prompts with specific experience of one day. Most students were able to write about activities that they do at weekends, including shopping, swimming, reading, playing computer games, visiting grandparents, going to the library and the park, doing homework, etc. They also wrote about the people they spent their weekends with and why they did those things. They could talk about how they felt about the weekends, usually expressing a happy mood. Their ideas were brief but relevant: ‘I played computer game at weekends...I felt happy!’, ‘I go shopping on weekends because we are happy.’, ‘I go the Sunny park at the weekends. I go with my mom and dad.’. The ideas were quite clear, though without much elaboration.
- Many students were able to make use of the prompts given and organise their ideas well: ‘I play football in the weekends, I play football at nine o’clock with Ryan. I go to Happy Park. I kick the ball into a goal. I feel happy, because I goal.’
- Some common vocabulary related to the topic were used: ‘play football’, ‘play computer games’, ‘shopping’, ‘swimming’, ‘mom and dad’, ‘sister’, ‘brother’, ‘friend’, ‘park’, ‘home’, ‘because’, ‘sometimes’, ‘happy’, ‘fun’ and ‘bored’. They were able to write short and simple sentences, e.g. ‘I usually go to playground at weekends with my friend.’, ‘My brother went to swimming pool with me.’, ‘I listen to CDs and music and I play computer games.’, ‘We play hide-and-seek together. I always win.’, ‘I feel happy because it is good to play there.’.
- Some students were able to use cohesive devices to link up ideas. They could use ‘and’, ‘because’, ‘when’ and ‘then’ to link up ideas. For example, they wrote ‘My brother and I watched cartoons in our sister home.’, ‘I feel happy because I have a good time.’, ‘When it is two o’clock in the afternoon I will go to have lunch with my sister.’, ‘I go to my friend’s house...Then, I went shopping with my mum.’.
- Grammatical mistakes were common in students’ writing. They made mistakes in grammar: ‘Tom read with me...I reading in my home’, ‘I usually skipping in the weekends....’, ‘...because the games is funny. I feel is happy.’, ‘I don’t like weekend because it was to boring’, ‘I played in the playground because had many friends.’,

‘I was boing so I and mum go shopping.’, ‘I always go to English lesson at the weekends...there had many people...’.

- Spelling mistakes could be found in students’ writing. They misspelled words such as ‘boing’ for ‘boring’, ‘swiming’ for ‘swimming’, ‘beaiteful’ for ‘beautiful’, ‘bark’ for ‘back’, ‘becuse’ for ‘because’, ‘sisten’ for ‘sister’, ‘thing’ for ‘think’, ‘brind’ for ‘bring’, ‘maks’ for ‘marks’, ‘storng’ for ‘strong’, ‘fiend’ for ‘friend’, ‘badminiton’ for ‘badminton’, ‘bug’ for ‘buy’.
- A small number of students were able to provide relevant ideas to the topic with some supporting details or examples, ‘I go to Time Square to shop because it is big so I can buy many things there’, ‘At night, my Mum cooking for the dinner. She is very good at cooking. The foods are yummy.’, ‘Mummy sometimes will take me to the beach. I love to make sandcastle. It is fun.’. The ideas were clear and coherent. Students were also able to use a wide range of vocabulary and sentence patterns. They were able to use ‘delighted’, ‘fantastic’, ‘far from the city’, ‘peaceful’, ‘buffet’, ‘magic show’, ‘feel great’ in their sentences. They could also present their ideas with varied sentence patterns, e.g. ‘we will buy some sweets or ice-cream to eat if we want’, ‘I go on picnics because we can breath fresh air. I go to country parks to have picnics because they are far from the city so it is very peaceful.’ They could use cohesive devices ‘because’, ‘so’, ‘but’, ‘then’ appropriately. For example, ‘I go to Time Square to shop because it is big so I can buy many things there.’, ‘I will watch my favourite cartoon with my brother. It is funny, but mummy doesn’t us watch TV...’, ‘I always go to visit grandma and grandpa at weekends in the morning. Then, we will go to Yummy fast food to have breakfast’.

P.3 Speaking

- In the ‘Reading Aloud’ component, more than half of the students could read a text quite clearly despite a few mistakes in pronunciation. Some of them, however, had difficulty correctly pronouncing words with final consonant blends like ‘iced’ (3ES01) and ‘cooks’ (3ES05), initial consonant blends like ‘fruit’ (3ES11) and long vowel sounds in words, such as ‘beach’ (3ES01) and ‘food’ (3ES03). Some students mispronounced words such as ‘cold’ for ‘cool’ (3ES01) and ‘they’ for ‘there’ (3ES09).

- For the 'Expression of Personal Experiences' component, most of the students could provide brief answers on a familiar topic in their conversations. Yet some students were hesitant or gave no responses even after being prompted by oral examiners. Students tended to perform better with questions that elicited factual information, such as 'Where are the children?' (3ES04) and 'What are they doing?' (3ES06). They did not respond as well to questions asking for reasons, e.g. '... Is he right? Why/Why not?' (3ES04) and 'How does this boy feel? Why?' (3ES10).
- In the 'Picture Description' component, more than half of the students were able to respond to the questions about the pictures. With familiar topics such as *A Birthday Gift* (3ES06) and *A School Picnic* (3ES12), students could provide brief answers to most of the questions naturally. However, some students had difficulty explaining why the boy having fallen off the bike cries (3ES10). They also had limited range of vocabulary to describe the actions of the characters (3ES02).

Comparison of Student Performances in English Language at Primary 3 TSA from 2008 to 2011

This was the eighth year that Primary 3 students participated in the Territory-wide System Assessment at the end of Key Stage 1. Due to the concerns over the possible outbreak of Human Swine Influenza, the written assessments of TSA 2009 were cancelled and no data could be collected. However, the percentage of students achieving Basic Competency over the previous years is provided in Table 7.9.

Table 7.9 Percentage of Students Achieving English Language Basic Competency in 2008, 2010 & 2011

Year	% of Students Achieving English Language Basic Competency
2008	79.3
2010	79.2
2011	79.8

A comparison of the strengths and weaknesses of P.3 student performances in TSA from 2008 to 2011 provides useful information on how teachers can help students improve. Table 7.10 summarises such a comparison.

Table 7.10 Comparison of Student Performances in English Language at Primary 3 TSA from 2008 to 2011*

Year Skill	2008	2010	2011
Listening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • P.3 students were still good at identifying key words with given cues. They were able to identify a wide range of familiar concepts. • Students were able to distinguish numbers like '7' and '17'. • Most students were able to identify a speaker's tone of voice regarding their feelings of happiness and sadness. • Some students were able to distinguish stressed from unstressed sounds. • Quite a number of students were able to make simple inferences from the spoken texts. • Most students were able to understand the connection between ideas using 'because'. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • P.3 students were able to identify key words on familiar topics such as phone number, age, food, time, activities and objects. • Students were able to distinguish initial consonants 'K' and 'J'. • Students were generally able to distinguish different feelings (e.g. happy, sad, nervous and excited) of speakers from their tones. • Many students were able to distinguish '16' and '60'. However, fewer students were able to distinguish '15' and '50'. • Most students were able to understand the connection between ideas by identifying cohesive devices 'and' and 'because'. 	<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'.

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

<div>Year</div> <div>Skill</div>	2008	2010	2011
Reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students could match key words with or without pictorial cues. Students were able to identify main ideas in reading texts using contextual clues or pictorial cues. Compared with last year, fewer students were capable of identifying the writer, the publisher of a book and in locating information on the table of contents. Students performed well in predicting the meaning of unfamiliar words by using contextual clues and pictorial cues. Students were able to make simple inferences. However, they were still weak in making inferences in longer texts, e.g. stories. Students with the best performances were able to interpret reference words correctly. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many students were able to identify key words with straightforward contextual clues. Some students were able to obtain information from the contents page of a book. They could identify the content of a chapter in a book correctly. Some students could interpret the meaning of unfamiliar words with contextual clues. When given pictorial cues, many students were able to deduce the content of a comic. Students were generally able to follow pronoun reference in which the pronoun was close to the subject it referred. 	<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.

<div>Year</div> <div>Skill</div>	2008	2010	2011
Writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When given prompts about a topic, students were able to provide brief but relevant ideas. When writing a story, they could provide a factual account based on given pictures. Few students could write interesting or imaginative stories. Spelling mistakes were common. Some students were not able to spell some common words correctly, e.g. 'happle' for 'apple', 'classmass' for 'classmate', 'baerd' for 'bread', 'sandwirts' for 'sandwiches', etc. There were also many grammatical mistakes in students' writing, e.g. 'The frog is jump to Mary', and 'I can saw tree, flower and frog.' Students were able to use cohesive devices such as 'and', 'then', 'however' and 'but' in their writing. Students provided brief ideas in their writing. Only students with the best performances were able to provide relevant ideas with supporting details. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students were generally able to write a factual account of the story with an ending, though not much supporting details were given. Students could also provide brief but relevant ideas about his/her day at school with given prompts. Few students could provide imaginative ideas. Students misspelled common words, e.g. 'happly' for 'happy', 'mike' for 'milk', 'prak' for 'park', 'text' for 'test', 'taked' for 'talked', 'sandwitch' for 'sandwich', etc. Grammatical mistakes were still common in students' writing, e.g. 'Tom see poor cat', 'I can played computer games.' Some students were able to use cohesive devices such as 'and', 'but', 'when', 'then', 'because', 'too' in their writing. A small number of students were able to provide relevant ideas with supporting details. 	<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.

<div>Year</div> <div>Skill</div>	2009	2010	2011
Speaking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 'Reading Aloud', about half of the students read the texts fluently and clearly despite a few errors in pronunciation. Some students had difficulty pronouncing final consonant blend sounds in certain words correctly. Students continued to provide brief answers to the questions in 'Expression of Personal Experiences'. Students did not respond as well to questions beginning with 'How' and 'Why' as to those that elicited factual answers. More than half the number of students was able to provide relevant answers to most questions in 'Picture Description'. Students could give more elaboration on familiar topics, such as <i>Tom and His Homework</i> and <i>Chinese New Year</i>. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For 'Reading Aloud', more than half of the students were able to read fluently and clearly. Most of them made a few mistakes in pronunciation. A small number of them were able to use appropriate pausing and intonation. For 'Expression of Personal Experiences', the majority of students were able to respond appropriately to most situations. Many of them provided relevant but brief answers to questions. Students with the best performance were able to provide elaboration to some questions. In 'Picture Description', most students could provide relevant but brief answer to questions. Students with the best performance were able to elaborate on their answers readily. They could provide more elaboration on familiar topics, such as <i>A Birthday Party</i>. 	<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>.