



How it Works: National Assessment Program, Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN)

What is it?

In term 2 of each year students in years 3 and 5 undergo a series of assessment tasks in the following areas; reading, writing, spelling, grammar and punctuation, and numeracy. NAPLAN is not a test of content. Instead, it tests skills in literacy and numeracy that are developed over time through the school curriculum. Excessive test preparation is not useful. NAPLAN tests broadly reflect aspects of literacy and numeracy common to the curriculum in each state or territory. The types of test formats and questions are chosen so that they are familiar to teachers and students across Australia.

Students sit the tests across a two-week period. The testing is set in the following order writing, reading, conventions of language and then numeracy.

What is it for?

The National Assessment Program (NAP) is the measure through which governments, education authorities, schools and the community can determine whether or not young Australians are meeting important educational outcomes.

It is important that there be consistent and well understood measures of student achievement around the country, and that the outcomes of these assessments be used to inform future policy development, resource allocation, curriculum planning and, where necessary, intervention programs. The NAP provides useful nationally comparable evidence about student achievement. By participating in these assessments schools benefit not only their own students, but also the students in every state and territory.

The information gained from these assessments provides the ACT system with indications about how our students are performing at certain points in time. It gives the Education Directorate information about where to put resourcing and what areas of the tested items the ACT is excelling in. There is no passing or failing of NAPLAN, it is a tool for gathering information and providing a snapshot of learners across Australia.

What we do at school to prepare students...

At school we explicitly teach reading and writing skills. This includes being able to identify explicit and implicit information in texts, structure complete sentences and develop spelling strategies to enable students to write the words they need for their writing.

To prepare for the actual testing process we have demonstrated how to complete the tests and given students opportunities to complete tasks that are in a NAPLAN style, such as multiple choice and short written answers.

We do not want students to become stressed about the testing, but we do need to prepare them for the situation, as it is very different to how normal school operates. We let the students know that this is one time when they must attempt the tasks with no adult support and we remind them to have a go.

What you can do at home to prepare your children...

You can help your children by;

- Being relaxed about the process yourself
- Reminding your children that it is a snapshot of their learning
- Encouraging them to always put in their best effort at school
- Making sure they have had enough sleep leading up to the testing
- Making sure they have had a healthy breakfast on the mornings of the test days