

NAPLAN 14

Newsletter: March 2014

To keep teachers informed, please post this newsletter on staff noticeboards.

Key dates in March

- Friday 7 — NAPLAN Student Details website closes for all schools
- Friday 28 — Final due date for applications to vary test dates

2014 national protocols

The National Protocols for Test Administration are set out in the *2014 Handbook for Principals*, which has been sent to all schools. The handbook is also available online at: www.qsa.qld.edu.au/8021.html.

This handbook is for all teachers, including teachers in special education units, who have responsibility for students eligible to sit the NAPLAN tests.

Teachers should familiarise themselves with the contents of the national protocols in the handbook.

Schools have been asked to acknowledge receipt of the handbooks through the NAPLAN portal.

Student details registration

Schools were advised about the collection of student data for the 2014 NAPLAN tests in QSA memo 010/14 published in January.

Please assist us to deliver the *right* number of tests to the *right* students at your school by checking that your student details are complete and correct by the time the website closes on 7 March.

Access the *NAPLAN portal* at <https://naplan.qsa.qld.edu.au/naplan>, or select *NAPLAN portal* from the *Services online* menu on the QSA homepage. Once on the portal, select *Test administration login* and enter your school BIC and password.

NAPLAN forms

All forms for test participation, ordering alternative formats, requesting adjustments for students with disability and other aspects of test administration, are available on your school's *Student details page* of the NAPLAN portal.

Adjustments for students with disability — key points

Adjustments are available **only for students with disability** to support their **access** to the tests and facilitate maximum participation.

The tests are not designed as formative tools, and adjustments appropriate for learning environments may not be appropriate for NAPLAN.

Each application for adjustment/s should be discussed with the student, their parents/carers, teachers and specialist staff to determine the most equitable and appropriate adjustment/s to enable the student to access the tests.

Tests in alternative formats

Braille, large print, and black and white textbooks and stimulus materials are available as adjustments for students **with disability** who regularly use these formats for learning and assessment.

An electronic version of the tests is available for students unable to access a pencil-and-paper test through any of the other adjustments available, including assistive technology.

In January, QSA memo 009/14 advised schools that requests for these formats were to be submitted by **21 February**. Late requests can be accepted for a limited time only, as materials have to be ordered from interstate.

Important information on the 2014 Writing test

In May, students will be given a stimulus that will provide a topic and require them to write in **one** particular way. They will be asked to write either a narrative or a persuasive text. **Students must write in the required form as specified by the task.** They **cannot** make their own choice of genre. They must be able to identify the form in which they need to respond from the stimulus.

Teachers should focus their teaching on identifying authors' purpose/s for writing, and the language through which they communicate their purpose/s.

Preparing students for the tests

The best preparation schools can provide for students is teaching the curriculum, as the tests reflect core elements of the curriculums of all states and territories.

Schools and teachers should adopt appropriate test preparation strategies that familiarise students with the test process and question formats, but do not excessively rehearse students. NAPLAN results should reflect students' own abilities, rather than prepared work.

Numeracy

Provide opportunities for students to read and interpret word problems without the pressure of having find solutions. Focus their attention on what the question is asking and have them restate the problem in their own words. Encourage students to recall a similar problem they have solved and the strategies they may have used. They should also look for any relationships between the numbers presented in the problem. To increase students' range of problem-solving strategies, provide opportunities for them to discuss and share their ideas in groups or as a class.

Students also need experience in interpreting graphics such as diagrams, graphs and tables, as these are often used in mathematics to support or elaborate information presented in text form. Providing opportunities for students to manipulate, construct and deconstruct 3-D objects will help them develop the visualisation skills needed to solve many spatial problems.

Teach and encourage students to estimate answers to questions before beginning calculations or selecting options in multiple-choice questions, and to consider the reasonableness of their answers. This is particularly important for answers obtained using a calculator (Years 7 and 9).

Ensure that students are familiar with the functions of the keys on their calculators and know how to use the calculator both to work problems and to check answers.

Language conventions

Students need to know the difference between a word, phrase and clause. Teach students the components of a sentence. Students should be able

to identify the verb or verb group in a clause, as this is the key to understanding sentence structure.

Adding adjectives, adverbs and prepositional phrases and clauses provide readers with more information in a sentence. As well as making sentences longer by adding words, phrases and clauses, older students need to know how to condense information in a sentence or leave out words without changing the meaning.

As sentences become longer, students need to revise sentence boundary punctuation. Teach punctuation as new sentence structures are being taught.

Teachers should also ensure that students know the metalanguage of grammar and punctuation appropriate to their year level.

Reading

Teach **thinking for reading** strategies. Have readers:

- read a paragraph and say to themselves "This is mostly about ..."
- jot a key word in the margin so they can locate key information easily
- note key facts and statistics (underline or circle) to remember them, and locate them later
- use QARs (question-answer relationships) as an **active** reading strategy:
 - Is the information **right there**?
 - Do I have to think and **search**?
 - What has the **author** told me and what knowledge do I have to use?
 - Am I **on my own** here? Do I have to use my brain?

For younger and/or less able students, **build stamina**. Have students:

- read sections aloud
- read short chunks of text, then pause and ask questions about the text
- read 'aloud' in their head with exaggerated expression, giving characters story voices so that they can follow the flow, or emphasising key points with their voice
- reread with a finger under the text to keep their eyes and mind focused.