

ILLUSTRATING THE WRITING STANDARD

'Events of the Past'

By the end of year 7, students are required to create a variety of texts in order to think about, record, and communicate experiences, ideas, and information across the curriculum. To meet the standard, students draw on the knowledge, skills, and attitudes for writing described in the Literacy Learning Progressions for students at this level.

The difference in the standard for year 8 [as compared with year 7] is the students' increased **accuracy** and **fluency** in writing a variety of texts across the curriculum, their **level of control and independence** in **selecting writing processes and strategies**, and the range of texts they write. In particular, by the end of year 8, students need to be **confidently and deliberately choosing the most appropriate processes and strategies** for writing in different learning areas. (*Reading and Writing Standards*, page 35)

The students in a year 7 and 8 class have undertaken an inquiry around the level 4 social studies objective "understand that events have causes and effects".

As part of their English focus on persuasive writing and using their social studies understandings, each student selected aspects of war they felt strongly about and wrote about the causes and effects of those aspects in order to remind others about the horrors of war.

The following example illustrates aspects of the task and text and demonstrates how a student engages with both task and text to meet the writing demands of the curriculum. A number of such examples would be used to inform the overall teacher judgment for this student.

Transcript: 'Events of the Past'

WWI, WWII, Antisemitism, Genocide. All these events of the past have impacted on peoples' live today ... through the survivors memories and words the vision of the hatred, the burning, and the loss ... Genocide has had an enormous impact on many peoples' lives and an unaccountable amount of lives have been lost. One such genocide was of the Jews in WWII. In this event millions of Jews were sent to ghetto's concentration and death camps ...

WWI also had a huge impact on the lives of many people, but particularly the soldiers, and the families who had to wait anxiously at their homes ...

The men went to war to fight for their country in Gallipoli. While the women became 'Land Girls,' and had to look after the crops, undertake all the jobs that the men usually did ...

The text begins with an introduction that presents the student's main point clearly and concludes with the same main point reiterated. The body of the text is broken into paragraphs, and each paragraph begins with a key sentence that is supported by relevant information. The student also makes good links between the content of paragraphs.

The text includes a range of sentence types, lengths, and beginnings. In particular, the student adds to the sense of authority of her point of view by incorporating many complex sentences (often using the passive voice). She also uses formal, rhetorical language ("the hatred, the burning, and the loss").

The student includes a range of information relevant to the topic. Her writing contains detail that has been selected carefully to substantiate the main points of the text. For example, the student substantiates her assertion that "genocide has had an enormous impact on many peoples' lives" by including some Holocaust-related facts. She also substantiates her assertion that World War I has had "a huge impact on the lives of many people" by referring to soldiers fighting in Gallipoli and women staying at home to work on the land.

Most of the student's sentences have been written fluently and accurately (such as the long sentence in the introductory paragraph) but some need additional work. For example, there is a distracting change of tense between paragraphs two and three. There is also a distracting subject-verb agreement error in paragraph five ("the significance of every event ... are shown"). However, even when sentences are not written fluently ("One such genocide was of the Jews"), their intended meaning is clear.

This student's developing control over accuracy and fluency demonstrates that she is meeting the curriculum demands of social sciences and English as she works towards level 4, as expected by the end of year 7.

The student appears to be adept at recrafting her work to make the meaning clearer. For example, in paragraph five, she has changed "the victories that they had made" to the more grammatically correct "The victories that they had experienced".

