

Writing assessment focus (AF) grids

AF1	Write imaginative, interesting and thoughtful texts
AF2	Produce texts that are appropriate to task, reader and purpose
AF3	Organise and present whole texts effectively, sequencing and structuring information, ideas and events
AF4	Construct paragraphs and use cohesion within and between paragraphs
AF5	Vary sentences for clarity, purpose and effect
AF6	Write with technical accuracy of syntax and punctuation in phrases, clauses and sentences
AF7	Select appropriate and effective vocabulary
AF8	Use correct spelling

Points to remember when using the writing AFs

- Writing is a complex unitary skill, so these elements are interactive and interdependent, even though they each can be analysed.
- The different facets of writing develop together: when teaching specific aspects of grammar, it is important to show how they relate to writing as a whole.
- Pupils need to learn how to orchestrate skills at the word, sentence and text levels in order to be able to write independently.
- When assessing, it is always important to look at the parts in relation to the text as a whole – for example, how individual sentences contribute to overall effect.
- Some evidence may relate to more than one AF – for example, AFs 1 and 3.

- There is not an AF for handwriting and presentation, but guidance about how to take account of these features is available for assessing levels 1 to 3 of the National Curriculum.

Writing: making a level judgement

- Use these steps to formalise your assessments of pupils' writing into level judgements. You will need:
 - evidence of pupils' writing that shows most independence – for example, from a range of subjects outside the supportive context of the literacy hour;
 - other evidence about the pupil as a writer – for example, notes on plans, pupil's own reflections and your own recollections of classroom interactions;
 - a copy of the assessment guidelines for the level borderline that is your starting point.

Step 1: Making best-fit judgements

Draw on what you know about the pupil's writing to decide if it best fits the criteria for the lower or higher level within each AF on the guidelines. A best fit does not mean that the pupil fulfils every aspect of the criteria for an AF.

- If you find you cannot make a judgement in any AF, enter a tick (✓) in the box for 'insufficient evidence (IE)'. Recording IE has implications for planning.
- If there is some evidence but not in your judgement enough to warrant highlighting of any of the criteria, tick (✓) in the 'below the level (BL)' box for the AF.
- When you are confident about which criteria are the best fit, highlight them.

Step 2: Work through the AFs

Starting with AF5, followed by AF6, look through the work to decide if it is best described as meeting the criteria for the lower or higher level within AF5 or AF6 on the guidelines sheet. Then decide whether what you know about the pupil's writing best fits the criteria above or below the line. Enter a tick (✓) in the box that relates most closely to the pupil's writing in AF5 and AF6.

Now repeat the process for the following pairs of assessment focuses:

- AF3 followed by AF4
- AF1 and AF2
- AF7 and AF8

For levels 2 and 3, make a judgement for handwriting.

Step 3: Making an overall level judgement

For level 2

- Three of AF6, AF5, AF1 and AF2
and
- Two of AF7, AF8 and handwriting

For all other levels

- Four of AFs 1 to 6. Use the judgement you have made in AF7 and AF8 to help confirm your overall judgement.

Step 4: Refining your judgement

Look across the AFs and decide whether the level is 'low', 'secure' or 'high':

- **Low** if there is highlighting above and below the line or if the evidence is thin.
- **Secure** if the criteria for the level are mostly highlighted across the AFs.
- **High** if all criteria for the level are highlighted across the AFs.

Enter a tick (✓) in the box that relates most closely to the pupil's writing overall.