

## Reviewing a reading task

Indicator: Audience/ Purpose/ Meaning – making strategies		
Performance Feature	Text	Tutor comments
Purpose and audience	You are looking for knowledge of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>what the document is used for</li> <li>who would read it?</li> </ul>	
Complexity	You are looking for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>reader confidence</li> <li>speed in reading for information</li> <li>how complex is the sentence structure?</li> </ul>	
Prediction and prior knowledge	You are looking for knowledge of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>vocabulary</li> <li>scanning for information</li> <li>word attack skills.</li> </ul>	
Text structure	You are looking for knowledge of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>layout of the text</li> <li>where to find . . .</li> </ul>	
Textual analysis	You are looking for skills of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>comparing and contrasting</li> <li>locating specific information.</li> </ul>	
Critical Literacy	You are looking for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>an understanding of how textual features help to determine meaning.</li> </ul>	

Indicator Text structure/ grammar/ strategies/ vocabulary		
Performance Features	Text	Tutor comments
Strategies	You are looking for skills of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>identifying key words</li> <li>chunking information</li> <li>prediction</li> <li>inference.</li> </ul>	
Textual clues	You are looking for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>depth of support required</li> <li>use of clues such as headings, images</li> <li>knowledge of spelling.</li> </ul>	
Grammar	You are looking for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>knowledge of sentence structure</li> <li>knowledge of linking sentences.</li> </ul>	
Vocabulary	You are looking for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>an understanding of vocabulary used in context.</li> </ul>	

ACSF Assessment Tasks are available at: [www.precisionconsultancy.com.au/acs\\_framework](http://www.precisionconsultancy.com.au/acs_framework)



## TUTOR TIPS

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# Working with the Australian Core Skills Framework

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## Overview of the Australian Core Skills Framework<sup>1</sup>.

The Australian Core Skills Framework (ACSF) is a validated set of benchmarks that provides a consistent national approach for identifying, describing, discussing and reporting performance in core language, literacy and numeracy skills, across a range of personal, community, training or workplace contexts. The framework is also used to map the different states' language, literacy and numeracy (LLN) curricula to provide a common language and reference point regarding student performance as well as for applying for funding. The ACSF is now being used extensively throughout Australia, particularly where government funding supports LLN programs.

### AUSTRALIAN CORE SKILLS FRAMEWORK

5 CORE SKILLS  
5 LEVELS OF PERFORMANCE  
6 ASPECTS OF COMMUNICATION

The ACSF describes five levels of performance in 5 core skills:

- Learning
- Writing
- Reading
- Oral communication
- Numeracy.

These skills have been recognised as fundamental to operating effectively in our modern society.

At each of the 5 levels, the framework provides a series of statements, called 'Indicators of Performance', which describe each of these skills. These indicators draw on current, relevant LLN theories that underpin each skill.

The 'Levels of Performance' are described in relation to support, context, text, and task complexity. That is, levels 1-5 are marked by a movement from short, simple texts, relating to concrete tasks in a familiar context, with full support, to highly complex texts requiring detailed analysis, across a broad range of contexts, with little or no support.

The ACSF is based on the previous National Reporting System (NRS) – a tool used for reporting outcomes of adult language, literacy and numeracy training since 1995. One feature of the NRS was the recognition that the use of language literacy and numeracy varies according to the different contexts in which individuals operate. These are indicated in both the NRS and the ACSF as six 'Aspects of Communication': personal, co-operative, procedural, technical, systems and public. For example, a person might write an email (personal), work with a colleague (co-operative), read a recipe or fire drill notice (procedural), consult technical drawings or manuals (technical), go for a job interview (systems), or participate in community groups (public). That is why 'context' is so important when addressing your student's level of performance.

1. Commonwealth of Australia (2003). *Australian Core Skills Framework*. Canberra: Adult Literacy Section, Foundation Skills Pathways, DEEWR.

A key principle of the framework is that, whilst the core skills of learning, writing, reading, oral communication and numeracy can be seen as discrete, their relationship can be vital to understanding how an individual will function in any task or role.

## How would tutors use this Framework?

There are a number of uses of the Framework for tutors:

- assessing the core skills of their learners pre- and post- training
- describing workplace skills
- discussing with learners, their current skills and those required for their work or training and
- mapping course outcomes to the Framework.

Tutors will find the sample activities and exemplar text types very helpful. They should also read the descriptors of required support at each level.

Whilst a summary is available and provides a very useful overview, this should be used for gaining an initial understanding only. The complete document provides the total picture but can be daunting for an initial reading.

## Core Skills

Each core skill is divided into a number of indicators with descriptors of that indicator at each level of performance.

For example:

**Reading** is divided into TWO indicators :

Indicator one looks at audience, purpose and meaning-making strategies commonly employed to read texts at each of the five levels of performance.

Indicator two describes the text structure and features, grammatical expression and word identification strategies required to read texts at the different levels of performance.

The features of each performance level for each indicator are then described.

These descriptors can be used by tutors when they want to assess the level of their learners' ability in each core skill or when they want to match the level of performance of their learners to the task required in the workplace.

## Assessing the literacy requirements of a task – an example

Let's take a common workplace task as an example: reading their payslip.

What is involved with reading a payslip?

Payslip Test Employer Ltd							
Employee 1	Number One	Date 19/04/2008		Week 1 No.	Weeks 1		
Works Reference 1	NHI Number NN111111A	Tax Code 503L		RunCode	NI Code A	Dept. 1	
PAYMENTS		DEDUCTIONS		YEAR-TO-DATE			
Hourly Rate	5.00						
Basic Hours	40.00	200.00		Tax	26.64	Tax	26.64
Hours @ 7.50	4.00	30.00		NI	15.73	NI	15.73
Hours @ 10.00	1.00	10.00				G/Pay	240.00
TotalHours	45.00					Employer's	
						NI	18.30
		Tot. Deduct		42.37			
						NI Statistics	
Total Gross Pay	240.00			Pay @ Std	240.00		
Less Deductions	42.37						
Net Pay	197.63	Paid by Cheque					

Sample payslip (Source: google images)

We should look at the knowledge and skills involved in this process.

*Knowledge* involves aspects such as:

- vocabulary – words such as nett, gross, overtime
- textual features – specific vocabulary and numeric details
- generic conventions – date, employer details, employee details
- audience, purpose – systems (employer to employee re pay)
- punctuation – eg G/pay, tot.deduct

*Skills* involves aspects such as:

- skimming and scanning – to see what payment has been made and when
- inferring - what pay period does this cover? Reading Left to Right and top to bottom
- activating prior knowledge – what payslips look like; vocabulary
- employing critical skills – judging – have I been paid correctly?

For English Second Language learners, we could also ask ourselves:

- What CULTURAL knowledge and skills would a learner need for success in this task?
- What STAGE of English language acquisition would a learner be in to achieve success in this task?

If we look at the *interrelatedness* of reading skills with the other core skills, we might also ask:

- What *numeracy* skills are required to interpret the pay slip correctly?
- What *oral communication* skills are required for any queries regarding the pay slip?

The tutor then can use the ACSF to determine the knowledge and skill levels REQUIRED to read the pay slip competently.

For example: Depending on the *purpose* for the pay slip task:

Reading: Level 1: Locating one's name  
 Level 2: Using a range of strategies to locate overtime or expenses  
 Level 3: Checking to see if hours of overtime are correct  
 Level 4-5: Reading to analyse and interpret

An assessment of the learner's knowledge and skills against the required skills will reveal any gaps.

The tutor's role then is to fill in the gaps. This is more easily accomplished if the tutor knows which elements need to be developed.

Tutors would look at the following performance features of each indicator:

### Indicator One

- Purpose and Audience
- Complexity
- Prior knowledge
- Text structure
- Textual analysis
- Critical literacy.

### Indicator Two

- Strategies
- Textual clues
- Grammar
- Vocabulary.

Reading a pay slip can be as simple as decoding and locating information but it should also involve reading for analysis and comparison, a much more complex process.

In summary, the ACSF provides a very useful framework for an analysis of these seemingly simple tasks but also ones which require more complex processing.

The template (next page) can be used to assist a tutor in determining the levels required to complete the task successfully.

There are many other ways of using this framework successfully.

**Any comments / questions feel free to email me:**

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**For more information about the Australian Core Skills Framework enter ACSF in your search engine or go to:**

**<http://www.deewr.gov.au/SKILLS/PROGRAMS/LITANDNUM/ACSF/Pages/default.aspx>**