

ILLUSTRATING THE WRITING STANDARD

It's mexicano nachos!

By the end of year 4, 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.

This example is placed at "By the end of year 4" because it demonstrates that the student is meeting the writing demands of the curriculum at level 2. The student has used a simple text structure to respond to the task, has included mostly relevant content (with some detail), and has chosen some specific nouns, verbs, and adjectives to convey ideas and information.

As part of their learning in health, the students in this year 4 class are learning to take action in order to be healthy.

Each student has selected a type of food that they like and that they would recommend to others as a healthy meal. In the writing example below, the student chooses an appropriate process to explain how the particular meal is made (including enough detail in the instructions for the reader to follow the process easily). The student has selected nachos as the food he would recommend even though he describes it as only a "sometimes healthy meal".

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: *Its mexicano nachos!*

*Its mexicano nachos!
Nachos are a type of Mexican crisp made from corn. They are triangular in shape or round. Nachos are often served with salsa, sour cream, guacamole, mince, beans, cheese, tomato and fresh herbs like coriander.*

How are nachos made? Read on and youll find out. To make good nachos put cheese on them. secondly put chili beans on it. Next put the nachos in the oven until the cheese is melted. And finnaly eat your mild and sometimes healthy meal.

The student has drawn on his existing knowledge of how nachos are served and uses appropriate terminology (and spelling) for all the main ingredients. He announces his topic to his readers by using two devices to engage them and make them want to read on. The first word of the title creates a feeling of immediacy about the food, and adding an exclamation mark to the title emphasises this feeling.

Although the student does not paragraph his text, he does begin with some introductory information about nachos. This includes what nachos are, what they look like, and what they can be served with. The tone of this introductory section is objective, which is indicated by his use of the timeless present tense ("Nachos are a type of Mexican crisp"), factual vocabulary, and formal language structures ("They are triangular in shape"). The student also enables the reader to visualise the meal by listing the specific foods that it could include.

The student engages his audience by posing the question "How are nachos made?" and inviting the reader to "Read on and you'll find out". Instead of the fairly formal tone of the introduction, this procedural section's more informal tone connects back to the fun title and reflects the writer's voice. His use of simple imperative verbs ("put", "eat") and his use of inclusive pronouns ("youll", "your") make it seem as if the student is communicating directly with the reader. He also helps the reader make sense of the instructions by prefacing most steps with a "sequence word". In response to teacher prompting, he reviews his use of "then" and changes two uses of it to "secondly" and "Next". This adds variety and interest. His set of instructions concludes with an invitation to "eat your mild and sometimes healthy meal".

Most of the student's sentences are simple or compound, and all are grammatically correct. Although his final sentence begins in an unusual way ("And finnaly eat"), this stylistic device continues the informal style of the writing and rounds off the series of inviting steps in a consistent way.

The student proofreads his text (shown, for example, by his capitalising "Mexican" and correcting the spelling of "To"). He has checked his spelling reasonably well, and his remaining errors indicate reasonable "sound to letter" transference skills.

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