Introducing the National Literacy and Numeracy Learning Progressions
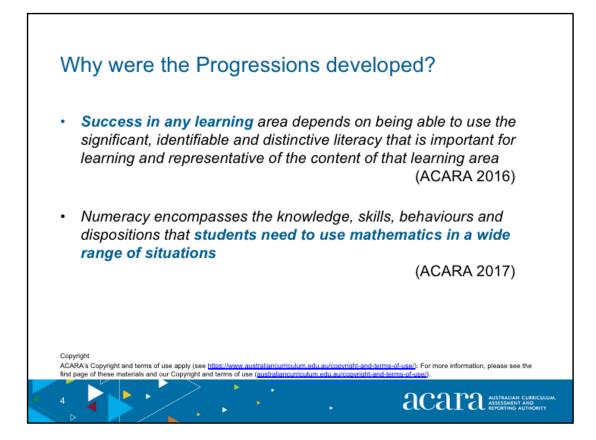
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Project overview

- ACARA, in partnership with NSW Department of Education, developed the progressions
- Three trial and revision processes throughout 2017
- Supported and reviewed by academics and experts
- Agreed by Education Ministers December 2017

- National Literacy and Numeracy Progression v2 published January 2018
- Feedback throughout 2018
- Possible v2.1 January 2019

The NLANLP (Progressions) were approved in December 2017 and published in January 2018 as a resource available to all schools and teachers. The Progressions were developed by a team from ACARA and NSW Department of Education, who received extensive support from a range of leading academics and teachers from across the country. Each educational jurisdiction will consider if and how it might use the Progressions.

Why were the Progressions developed?

- *Success in any learning* area depends on being able to use the significant, identifiable and distinctive literacy that is important for learning and representative of the content of that learning area

(ACARA 2016)

- *Numeracy encompasses the knowledge, skills, behaviours and dispositions that* **students need to use mathematics in a wide range of situations**

(ACARA 2017)

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Literacy and numeracy statistics in Australia

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iJ69iI4JjJc

SBS 'Insight' 2016

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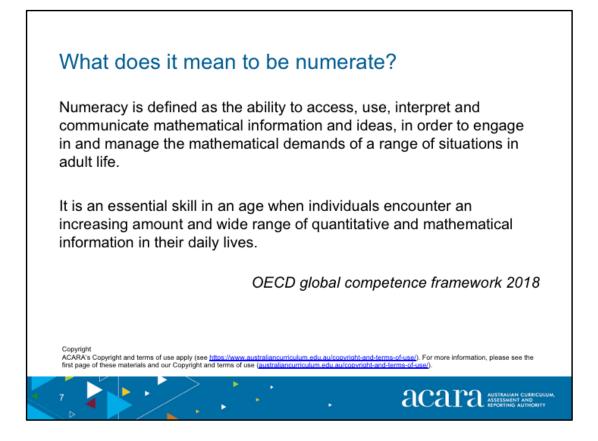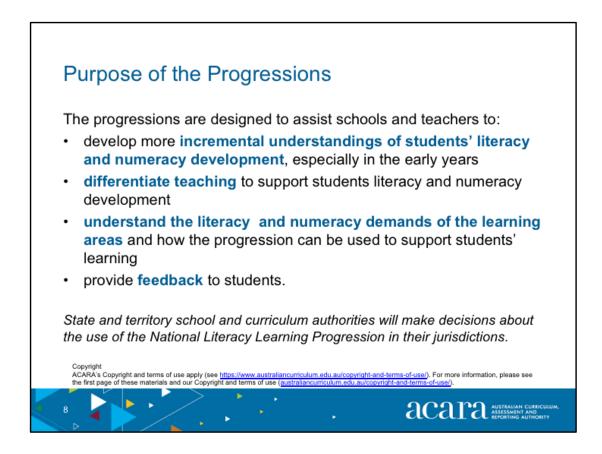
Although there is not a lot of good news in this short clip, there are probably no surprises, either. However, the video notes that even small improvements in students' literacy and numeracy can have a significant impact on their long term life options. And this is just in the narrow field of employment. If we are consider the key goal of the Melbourne Declaration that 'All young Australians become: successful learners, confident and creative individuals and active and informed citizens' we immediately recognise that this would be difficult to achieve if we allow our students to leave the school system with poor literacy or numeracy.

What does it mean to be literate?

- select sources purposefully on the basis of their relevance and reliability
- use a logical, systematic and sequential approach to examine information in a text or any other form of media, examining connections and discrepancies
- evaluate the worth, validity and reliability of any material on the basis of its internal consistency, and its consistency with evidence and with one's own knowledge and experience.

OECD global competence framework 2018

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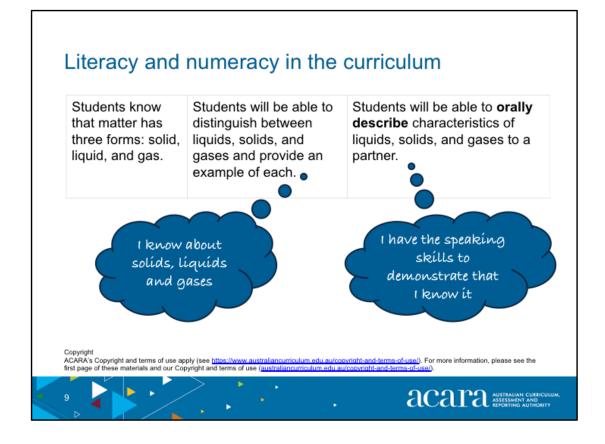
When we think of literacy we often think of just the essentials of reading and writing – the functional literacy that we may use in everyday life such as reading messages on our phone or browsing an online shopping catalogue. The sophisticated skills that the OECD describes as important aspects of literacy involve much more complex knowledge and understandings than we may usually associate with fundamental literacy. Having the skills to recognise the various ways that media attempts to influence and persuade readers and viewers is a critical skill if our students are to become those 'active and informed citizens' we aim to develop. Basic literacy is a great starting point but students need comprehensive literacy skills and understandings, as outlined in these examples from the OECD, if they are to succeed in the education system.

What does it mean to be numerate?

Numeracy is defined as the ability to access, use, interpret and communicate mathematical information and ideas, in order to engage in and manage the mathematical demands of a range of situations in adult life.

It is an essential skill in an age when individuals encounter an increasing amount and wide range of quantitative and mathematical information in their daily lives.
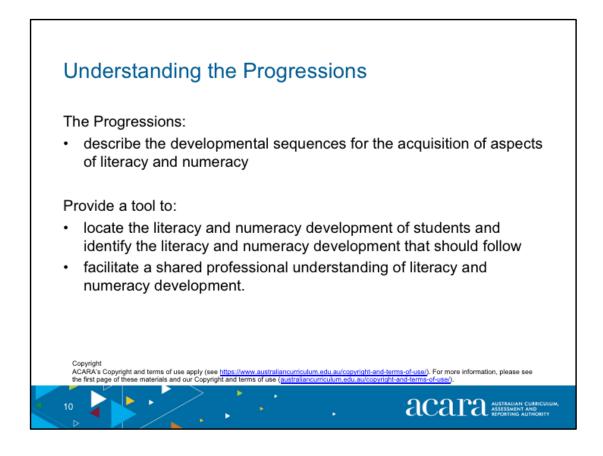
OECD global competence framework 2018

This expansive range of skills is paralleled in numeracy – it is not enough to just be able to count money and read a timetable, although for some students this is challenging enough. Students need skills in such areas as reading and interpreting a wide range of data or comparing and contrasting statistics that include a range of variables.

Purpose of the Progressions

The progressions are designed to assist schools and teachers to:

- develop more **incremental understandings of students' literacy and numeracy development**, especially in the early years
- **differentiate teaching** to support students literacy and numeracy development
- **understand the literacy and numeracy demands of the learning areas** and how the progression can be used to support students' learning
- provide **feedback** to students.

State and territory school and curriculum authorities will make decisions about the use of the National Literacy Learning Progression in their jurisdictions.

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The Progressions are a tool to support teachers to understand the literacy and numeracy development of their students. Once students have been located on the Progressions teachers can use them to inform their teaching, to ensure all students stay on track in literacy and numeracy. Students follow a similar path as they develop in literacy and numeracy, but the rate at which they develop might be quite variable. The Progressions are not linked to a student's age or school grade.
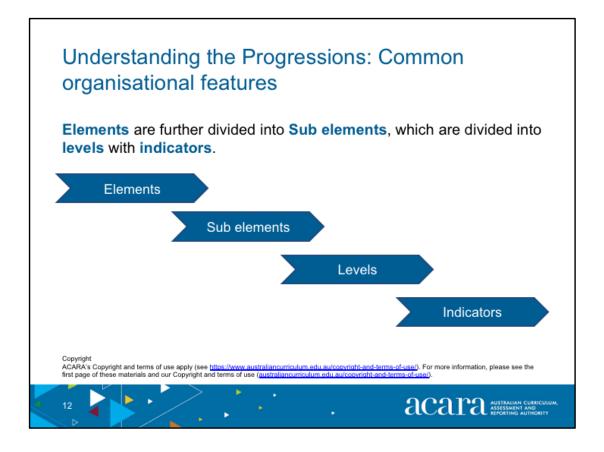
The Australian Curriculum: Science expects students to be able to describe the properties of solids, liquids and gases. In order to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding students would need literacy skills – they may need to give an oral description or comparison or they may need to complete an activity that requires them to read and write. The teacher needs to ensure that the student has the knowledge and understanding of the scientific concept AND the literacy skills to effectively demonstrate this knowledge.

Understanding the Progressions

The Progressions:
- describe the developmental sequences for the acquisition of aspects of literacy and numeracy

Provide a tool to:
- locate the literacy and numeracy development of students and identify the literacy and numeracy development that should follow
- facilitate a shared professional understanding of literacy and numeracy development.

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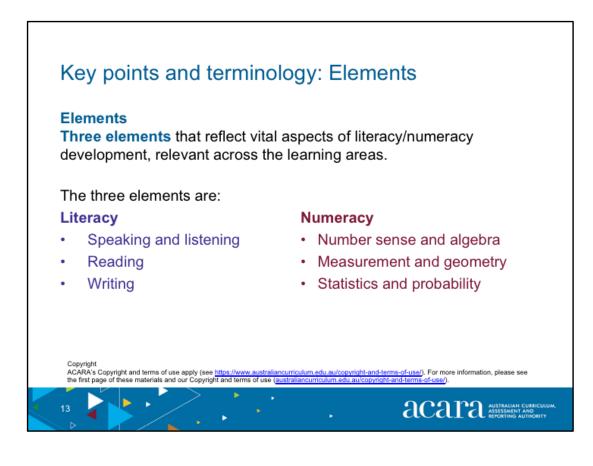acara AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM, ASSESSMENT AND REPORTING AUTHORITY

The development pathway described in the Progressions is based on most current research. As the Progressions were being written it became evident that in some aspects of literacy and numeracy, such as the acquisition of counting skills, extensive research evidence was available to form the base of the Progressions. In some other aspects research was more limited so the Progressions were developed on the best available evidence, supported by conventions of practice that were described by teachers involved in trialling the Progressions.
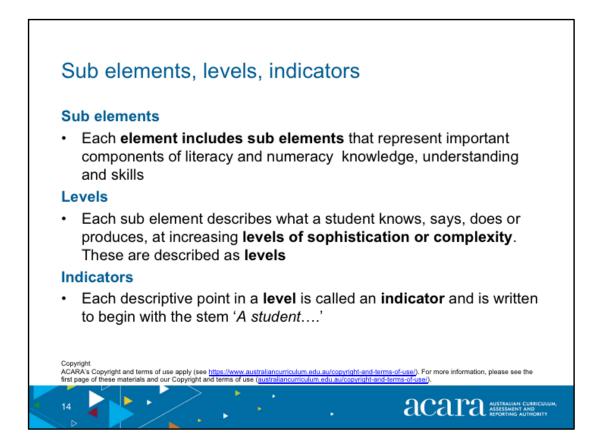
Use of the Progressions aligns with the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers. 'Standard 2.5: Apply knowledge and understanding of effective teaching strategies to support students' literacy and numeracy achievement' can obviously be supported through developing understanding of the Progressions but it is hoped that teachers will recognise the potential of the Progressions to provide a springboard for informed professional dialogue around literacy and numeracy to improve practice – as described in standard 6.
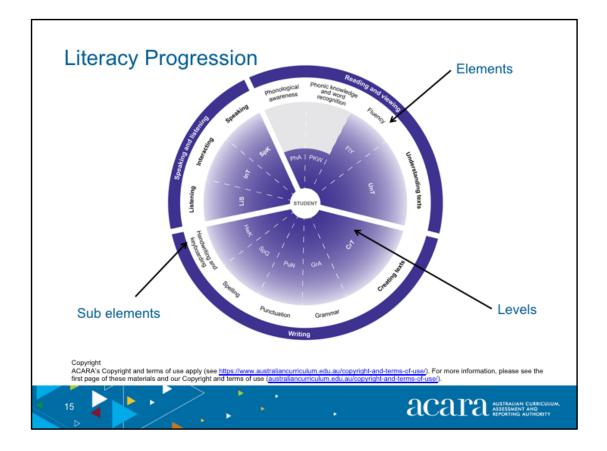
It is anticipated that teachers will quickly gain familiarity with the elements and sub elements. These are structural features, such as 'reading' or 'measurement and geometry' – terms which will be familiar to most teachers. As teachers work with the Progressions they will become skilled at placing students on an approximate level. As they gain familiarity with the indicator points and will be able to accurately locate a student on the Progression.

Key points and terminology: Elements

Elements
Three elements that reflect vital aspects of literacy/numeracy development, relevant across the learning areas.

The three elements are:

Literacy
- Speaking and listening
- Reading
- Writing

Numeracy
- Number sense and algebra
- Measurement and geometry
- Statistics and probability

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Sub elements, levels, indicators

Sub elements

- Each **element includes sub elements** that represent important components of literacy and numeracy knowledge, understanding and skills

Levels

- Each sub element describes what a student knows, says, does or produces, at increasing **levels of sophistication or complexity**. These are described as **levels**

Indicators

- Each descriptive point in a **level** is called an **indicator** and is written to begin with the stem '*A student….*'

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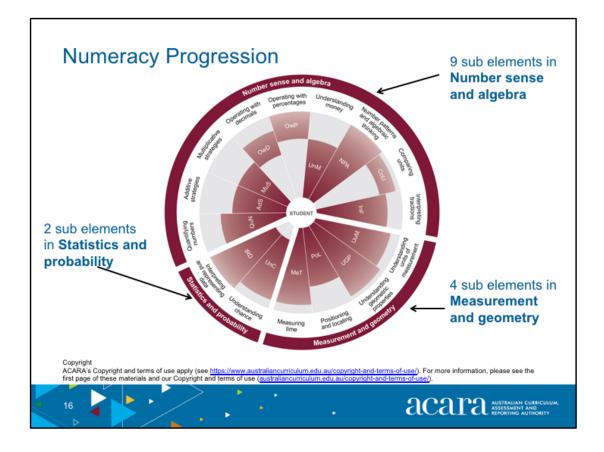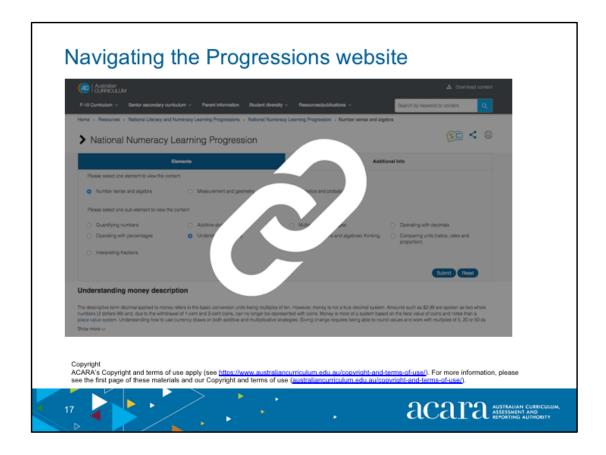acara AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM, ASSESSMENT AND REPORTING AUTHORITY

As the Progressions are deliberately fine grained they are organised in such a way that teachers could move from the big picture, such as reading, to the specific such as 'a student interprets visual elements in a multimodal text'. The starting point is the element, then the sub element. Within the sub element the teacher uses the indicators to place a student on a level.
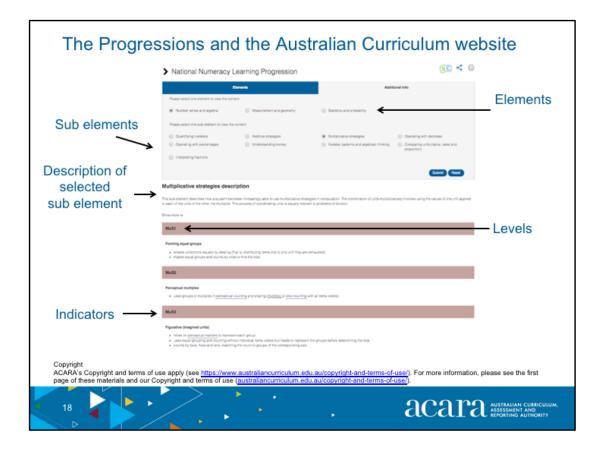
The following diagrams show how the organisational features such as elements and sub elements fit together. In the literacy diagram some sub elements, such as Understanding texts, are represented in bold and have a bigger 'slice of the pie'. This is because they overarch the sub elements. Some sub elements do not have levels that are continuously developing. These can be described as 'constrained' sub elements and include phonemic awareness and word knowledge. It is expected that most students would have completed this sub element within the first few years of schooling. Other sub elements continue to develop throughout the years of schooling and often beyond.

The amount of time it takes students to progress through each level is not specified since students develop literacy at different rates. Some aspects of numeracy do not begin until secondary school, while others are completed by most students before they leave primary school.
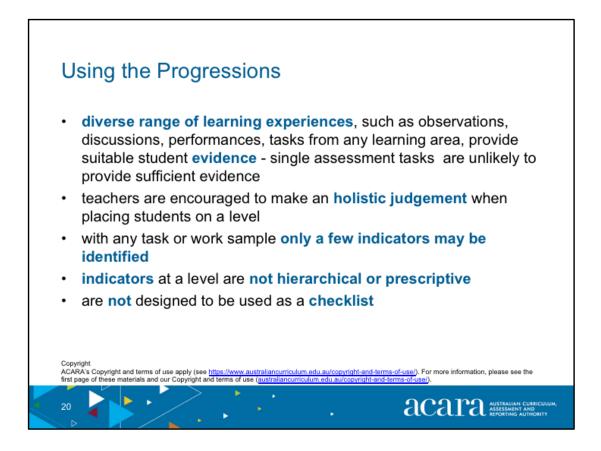
Use this link to open a page of the Progressions - Numeracy; Element: Number sense and algebra; Sub element: Understanding money. Open the sub elements and scroll through the levels, looking at the indicator points. You may like to explore some other key parts of the Progressions site, such as the Learning area advice.
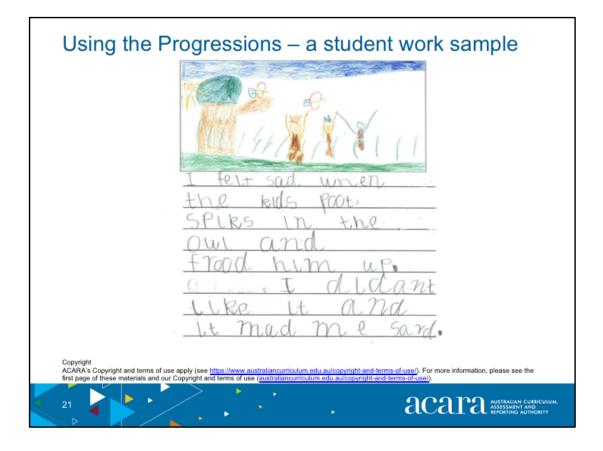
Literacy skills are explicit in the Australian Curriculum: English. Numeracy skills are explicit in the Australian Curriculum: Mathematics. It is likely that much of the explicit teaching of literacy and numeracy will occur in the context of English and mathematics lessons. However, literacy and numeracy are strengthened, made specific and extended in other learning areas. Each sub element in the Progressions has been mapped to the year level expectations set by the Australian Curriculum in English and Mathematics. This view of the Progressions can be accessed by using the 'Additional info' tab. As well there is advice about how secondary teachers in some subjects might use the Progressions to support literacy and numeracy development in the context of their learning area.

It is expected that teachers take some time to familiarise themselves with the Progressions. There is no one 'right way' to use the Progressions but the points on this slide provide guidance for their optimal use. They are designed to improve teachers' understandings of the literacy and numeracy development of their students and a number of the indicators can only be judged as the teacher is interacting with the student: for example, 'the student … reads accurately at an efficient pace without overt sounding and blending'. This would be noted when the teacher is listening to the student read aloud. The teacher would again note this behaviour after listening to the student read two or three times. Many indicators could be judged using student work samples. However, it is unlikely that any single work sample would provide enough evidence to place a student on a level on the Progression. It is also unlikely that a student would demonstrate skills and knowledge at only one level. Rather, it is quite possible that students may demonstrate indicators from across a couple of levels. In these circumstances teachers would make a holistic judgement, based on the indicators where student is showing the greatest proficiency. The length of time that it takes a student to transition from one level to the next will vary, with most students progressing more rapidly through the early levels.

Using the Progressions

- **diverse range of learning experiences**, such as observations, discussions, performances, tasks from any learning area, provide suitable student **evidence** - single assessment tasks are unlikely to provide sufficient evidence
- teachers are encouraged to make an **holistic judgement** when placing students on a level
- with any task or work sample **only a few indicators may be identified**
- **indicators** at a level are **not hierarchical or prescriptive**
- are **not** designed to be used as a **checklist**

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The entry point for each sub element is not the same, so the levels do not align across sub elements. This slide shows one indicator from level 1 in each of four different literacy sub elements. Clearly most students would not be demonstrating these skills simultaneously. Students are likely to be able to make simple oral requests before they are able to produce letters to represent words.

Using the Progressions – a student work sample

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The text of this work sample is: 'I felt sad when the kids put spikes in the owl and threw him up. I didn't like it and it made me sad.' The following slides demonstrate how this piece of student writing can be used to locate a student on the Literacy Progression.

Using this sample to place student on the progression – *estimate level 'Crt4' in Creating texts as starting point*

CrT4

Crafting ideas

- talks about the purpose and audience of familiar imaginative and informative texts
- writes one or more ideas which are not necessarily related, using sentence fragments (labels a drawing)
- writes texts in different forms (lists, story)
- combines visuals with written text where appropriate ✓
- reads back own writing
- talks about own text and describes details ✓

Text forms and features

- writes some appropriate letter combinations to represent words (see *Spelling* and *Phonic knowledge and word recognition*)
- includes noun-verb agreement in sentence fragments (see *Grammar*) ✓
- writes from left to right using spaces between attempted words ✓
- uses basic noun groups (my house) (see *Grammar*) ✓

Vocabulary

- writes a small range of familiar common words
- writes two- and three-letter high-frequency words ✓
- includes learnt vocabulary in own texts ✓
- asks for help with less familiar words ✓

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Notice the structural features of Creating Texts and its the three sub headings. While CrT4 has many indicator points, only some will be evident in this work sample. Remember, a single work sample is not sufficient to make a decision about which level a student may be on. However, there are good indications that this student is demonstrating a number of indicators at level 4. The ticks show that these points are demonstrated in the sample. Indicators that are not ticked cannot be judged from this sample. Even when the indicator is ticked, one sample only provides minimal evidence. At this stage a teacher would be considering CrT4 for this student.

Using this sample to place student on the progression – check CrT5 – *are there indicators from the next level that are evident in the sample?*

Crafting ideas
- writes text for a familiar purpose (to recount a personal experience, to tell a story, to express thoughts and feelings, to give an opinion) 🌀
- writes two or three related ideas which may include other unrelated ideas **X**
- uses ideas from informative and imaginative texts read or viewed for own writing

Text forms and features
- structures ideas into simple sentences made up of basic verb groups, noun groups and phrases (see Grammar) **X**
- uses adjectives to add meaning by describing qualities or features (red, small, long) **X**
- expresses feelings and opinions about people and things (nice) 🌀
- writes identifiable clauses often linked using 'and' (see Grammar) 🌀
- uses logical word order in sentences (see Grammar) 🌀
- makes plausible attempts to write unfamiliar words phonetically (enjn for engine)
- uses upper-case letters correctly to indicate proper nouns
- uses capital letters and full stops correctly at the start and end of sentences 🌀

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The teacher might then consider the next level of Creating Texts. Is there evidence in the work sample that the student may be at level CrT5? Although the student is starting to demonstrate some skills at this level there are also a number of indicators, marked with a red X, which they are not yet demonstrating. Indicators marked with a pink 🌀 could be described as emergent: the student is just beginning to develop these skills. Based on this one work sample the student is best placed at CrT4. However, more evidence would be collected before making a firm judgement. CrT5 then provides the teacher with guidance regarding 'where to from here?' in this student's learning.