

FREE PARENT GUIDE

Year 3 NAPLAN Success Guide

A practical guide for parents to support their child's learning and prepare confidently for NAPLAN.

Inside this guide:

- Understanding NAPLAN Writing
- Reading Comprehension Strategies
- Vocabulary Checklist
- Common Writing Mistakes
- High-Band Writing Features
- Preparing for Selective Pathways

The Writing Club — Sydney's Writing Specialists

Welcome

Year 3 is an important milestone — it's the first year students sit NAPLAN. While NAPLAN is just one part of your child's learning journey, understanding what it assesses and how to support your child can ease the pressure and build genuine confidence. This guide covers what NAPLAN writing involves, key reading and vocabulary strategies, common pitfalls to avoid, and what sets high-band responses apart.

Understanding NAPLAN Writing

The NAPLAN writing task asks students to respond to a prompt within a set time, usually in a narrative or persuasive text type. Responses are assessed against criteria including:

- Audience — how well the writing engages and suits its reader
- Text structure — a clear and appropriate structure for the text type
- Ideas — the quality, relevance and development of ideas
- Character and setting / Persuasive devices — depending on text type
- Vocabulary — range and precision of word choice
- Sentence structure, punctuation and spelling — accuracy and control
- Paragraphing and cohesion — how ideas are organised and connected

Reading Comprehension Strategies

- Skim the text first to get a general sense, then read more closely to answer questions
- Underline or note key information as you read
- Look for evidence in the text to support inferential questions, not just literal ones
- Pay attention to language features (figurative language, tone, point of view) and how they affect meaning
- Practise answering multiple-choice and short-answer questions under timed conditions

Vocabulary Checklist

A strong, varied vocabulary supports both reading comprehension and writing quality. By Year 3, look for your child:

- Using academic and topic-specific vocabulary appropriate to the subject
- Choosing precise verbs and adjectives instead of repeating simple words
- Using figurative language such as similes, metaphors and personification
- Understanding and using connectives to show cause, sequence and contrast (e.g. because, however, meanwhile)
- Building a 'word bank' of strong vocabulary for narrative, persuasive and informative writing
- Using synonyms to avoid repeating the same word multiple times

Common Writing Mistakes

Rushing the orientation

Diving straight into action without establishing who, where and when can confuse readers and lower text structure scores.

Repetitive sentence openers

Starting every sentence with 'I' or 'Then' makes writing feel monotonous. Encourage varied openers (time phrases, descriptions, -ing words).

Overusing basic vocabulary

Words like 'nice', 'good', 'said' and 'went' repeated often weaken vocabulary scores. Build a bank of stronger alternatives.

Weak conclusions

Stories or arguments that simply stop, rather than resolving or summarising, can leave responses feeling incomplete.

Not leaving time to edit

Many students run out of time to check their work. Practising the full writing process — plan, write, edit — under time pressure is essential.

Ignoring the prompt

Responses that drift away from the given topic or text type lose marks for audience and text structure, regardless of writing quality.

High-Band Writing Features

Responses that achieve high bands typically share these features:

- A clear, well-paced structure suited to the text type (e.g. orientation, complication, resolution for narratives)
- Ideas that are original, well-developed and relevant to the prompt
- A wide and precise vocabulary used naturally, not forced
- Varied sentence structures, including complex sentences used accurately
- Strong control of punctuation and spelling, including for more ambitious vocabulary
- Clear paragraphing that organises and connects ideas logically
- A consistent voice and awareness of audience throughout

Preparing for Selective Pathways

While Selective School tests are still some years away for Year 3 students, the habits built now lay the groundwork:

- Regular exposure to high-quality writing models across narrative, persuasive and informative texts
- Developing strong vocabulary and grammar accuracy as everyday habits, not just exam skills
- Practising planning and structuring writing before putting pen to paper
- Building stamina and focus for longer reading and writing tasks
- Encouraging a love of reading across a wide range of texts and genres

Not Sure Where Your Child Currently Stands?

Book a complimentary assessment valued at \$150 and receive personalised feedback on your child's literacy development.

45–60 minute assessment	Detailed learning report	Personalised learning plan
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