



What's New Since Our Last Talanoa Ako?

The refreshed English Curriculum for Years 7 to 13 in Aotearoa New Zealand was released in draft form at the end of March 2025. This updated curriculum reflects current best practice and will be further refined based on sector feedback. The final version, aligned across Years 0 to 13, is expected to be released by the end of 2025 for implementation in 2026.

Phase Three – Years 7–8

Phase Three maintains consistency with earlier phases of the refreshed curriculum in terms of structure. The English learning programme is organised around three key strands: **Oral Language, Reading, and Writing**. These strands retain a strong focus on structured literacy, building on the foundation laid in the primary years.

This phase also marks the beginning of a subject-specific approach to English learning, preparing students for the deeper study of texts and language in the senior years. It acts as a bridge between the primary and secondary English curricula, ensuring continuity and progression in learning.

While Phase Three covers both Year 7 and Year 8, there are specific teaching sequence statements for each year level, as well as others that span the full phase. An example of this is shown below.

		During year 7 Informed by prior learning, teach students to:	During year 8 To consolidate learning, teach students to:
Comprehension	Comprehension monitoring	› monitor and confirm their understanding across a range of texts and sources of information by annotating, rereading, reading ahead, asking questions, and visualising	› monitor and check their understanding across a range of texts and sources by selecting appropriate strategies, including annotating, reading ahead, asking questions, and consulting references
	Summarising and drawing conclusions	› identify the main ideas and supporting details in texts, and draw conclusions that are well supported by evidence from the text › summarise the themes of a text, and show how the author has developed it by providing a main idea, supporting details, and a conclusion	› compare, evaluate, and synthesise the main ideas and themes within and across texts to build meaning › draw conclusions about themes or topics that are well supported by evidence from the text
	Inferring using evidence	› make local and global inferences to examine texts closely, using both clear evidence from the text and interpretations to develop understanding	› make local and global inferences to examine a range of texts closely, using both clear evidence from the text and interpretations to develop a deeper understanding
Critical analysis	Author's purpose	› know why authors make their texts and how their backgrounds shape the way they present different topics › identify the author's purpose that underpins the text › identify how people, places, or ideas are represented in texts › identify whose positions are being represented	
	Making connections and interpretations	› explain how the ideas expressed in texts connect to experiences, skills, and knowledge › notice cultural elements (e.g., values, rituals, ceremonies, symbolism, art, and dance) that are represented in a range of texts and explain how these elements help communicate meaning › use evidence from a text, together with prior knowledge, to make interpretations of the text, drawing on other texts for comparison › acknowledge and build on others' ideas, respectfully challenging other students' interpretations	
	Digital literacy	› evaluate the validity of digital and media texts › analyse the different forms and conventions of digital texts to identify the intended purpose, message, context, and audience of the texts.	

Literacy Development and Handwriting Expectations

As part of the focus on literacy, handwriting fluency continues to be monitored. The following benchmarks have been provided as a guide for handwriting speed:

- **Year 7:** Girls – 91 letters per minute | Boys – 78 letters per minute
- **Year 8:** Girls – 109 letters per minute | Boys – 91 letters per minute

The Ministry of Education has also released a new handwriting resource. The style of handwriting to be taught has been updated slightly from previous versions.



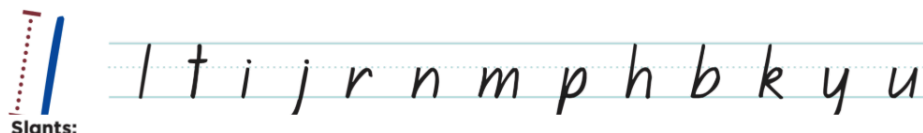
Rounded 'c' shape:



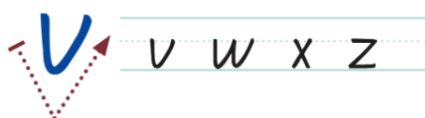
Curve start:



Straight down start:



Slants:



Text Requirements for Years 7–10

To ensure students engage with a wide range of texts and develop strong literacy skills, the curriculum requires interaction with the following text types during Phase Three:

- At least two **extended written texts**
- At least one **collection of poetry**
- At least one **film**
- At least one **drama text**
- A variety of other text forms, including **short stories, non-fiction, and visual, spoken, multimodal, and digital texts**

Professional Development at Mt Roskill Intermediate

All classroom teachers at Mt Roskill Intermediate are currently undertaking professional development in structured literacy, funded by the Ministry of Education. To date, staff have attended two full-day professional development sessions, with a third scheduled for Week Three of this term.

In addition, teachers have been engaging in an online professional development series outside of regular school hours. They have completed four of the eight after-school sessions offered, with the final four sessions taking place this term.

This ongoing professional learning ensures that our teaching staff are well-equipped to deliver the refreshed English curriculum effectively and support all learners in developing strong literacy skills.

Assessment

The Ministry of Education has indicated that a new assessment tool aligned with the refreshed curriculum will be introduced in 2026. At present, there is no formal mechanism to measure student progress specifically against Phase Three of the new curriculum, so we continue to rely on teacher professional judgement. Ongoing professional development remains a key priority for our staff, as it supports a deeper understanding of the curriculum and ensures that teaching and assessment practices are both accurate and effective. This focus will continue to be a central part of our work throughout 2025 and will continue in 2026.