

Literacy: Twice-yearly assessments

This guide will support your school decision making regarding twice-yearly assessments using NZCER's standardised suite of literacy assessment tools.

Assessment purpose and time points

When deciding on twice-yearly assessments it is important to consider the purpose underlying each assessment timepoint to ensure the use of the data is aligned with improving teaching and learning.

As you decide on the purpose for the assessment(s) and time points, consider:

- monitoring progress over a 12-month period
- focus for each assessment time point; for example,
 - identifying concept strengths and next steps
 - monitoring evidence against annual plan goals
 - monitoring individual/cohort ākongā progress
 - providing a source of evidence for monitoring impact on kaiako professional learning
- identifying the assessments that will be undertaken, ensuring a clear purpose for their use; for example,
 - baseline monitoring and tracking
 - data for focused inquiry
 - literacy focus
 - school level review of progress and achievement.

The examples below illustrate possible assessment scenarios as prompts for their assessment decision making. Schools will make autonomous decisions and decide on the appropriate time points (terms) for the sitting of assessment.

Choosing literacy tests for twice-yearly assessments

Schools can use PAT assessments twice a year as part of a wide range of tools and data sources to track learning progress. Typically, schools administer PATs at the beginning of Term 1 and as late in Term 4, as scheduling allows. However, it is important to note that PATs are not designed to measure short-term progress within a single school year. Instead, they help build trend information over a student's time at school, providing insights into their overall learning progress.

NZCER has a range of tools to support assessing the literacy skills of ākongā:

- PAT: Pānui | Reading Comprehension
- PAT: Vocabulary (static and adaptive)
- PAT: Listening Comprehension
- PAT: Punctuation and Grammar
- STAR – Supplementary Test of Achievement in Reading
- PAT: Writing (currently in development)

The selection of assessment tools will reflect school's monitoring baseline data of ākongā progress in specific areas of literacy.

NZCER's Education Advisors are available to facilitate strategic discussions to ensure schools develop assessment plans that are relevant to their individual needs.

NZCER provides professional learning workshops for kaiako and leaders on effective and strategic use of the data gathered through standardised assessments.

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Examples of twice-yearly assessment approaches

Scenario 1: Term 1 to Term 1 monitoring progress

School One is using the data for school self-review to monitor individual/cohort progress in literacy against three time points over 12 months. In Term, 3 ākongā will sit the recommended year level test but tests can be differentiated for ākongā working at different year level expectations. School One is using the PAT: Pānui and STAR information as part of their internal discussions and learning conversations with whānau in Terms 1 and 3.

Timepoint	Assessment	Data analysis focus
Term 1	PAT: Pānui (Years 4–8) STAR (Year 3) Test 3-4A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kaiako and team analysis of individual and item reports to identify strengths and next steps for teaching and learning of literacy skills for Terms 1 and 2. • Track individual and cohort position and progress over time (T1–T1 yearly) to inform strategic planning for the year.
Term 3	PAT: Pānui (Years 4–8) STAR (Year 3) Test 3-4B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kaiako and team analysis of individual and item reports to identify strengths and next steps for teaching and learning for Terms 3 and 4. • Monitor ākongā progress in literacy skills and knowledge from report analysis.
Term 1 (following year)	PAT: Pānui (Years 4–8) STAR (Year 3) Test 3-4B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kaiako and team analysis of individual and item reports to identify strengths and next steps for teaching and learning of literacy skills for Terms 1 and 2. • Track individual and cohort position and progress over time (T1–T1 yearly) to inform strategic planning for the year.

Scenario 2: Term 1 to Term 4 monitoring progress

School Two is using the data for school self-review to monitor individual/cohort progress in literacy against two time points within the calendar year. In Term 4 ākongā will sit the recommended year level test but tests can be differentiated for ākongā working at different year level expectations. School Two is using the link between oral language and reading success as part of their internal discussions and learning conversations with whānau in Terms 1 and 3.

Timepoint	Assessment	Data analysis focus
Term 1	PAT: Listening Comprehension PAT: Vocabulary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kaiako and team analysis of individual and item reports to identify strengths and needs of vocabulary skills and identify the possible need to expand vocabulary, to improve literacy outcomes. • Track individual and cohort position and progress over time (T1–T1 yearly) to inform strategic planning for the year.
Term 4	PAT: Listening Comprehension PAT: Vocabulary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Track individual and cohort progress over time (T1–T4 yearly) as a source of evidence to review the effectiveness of the schoolwide decision making. • Monitor ākongā progress in literacy skills and knowledge from report analysis.

Scenario 3 Term 1 to Term 1 monitoring progress

School Three is using the data for school self-review to monitor individual/cohort progress in literacy against three time point over 12 months. In Term 3 ākongā will sit the recommended year level test but tests can be differentiated for ākongā working at different year level expectations. School Three is using the PAT: Pānui and Punctuation and Grammar information as part of their internal discussions and learning conversations with whānau in Terms 1 and 3.

Timepoint	Assessment	Data analysis focus
Term 1	PAT: Pānui (Years 7–10) PAT: Punctuation and Grammar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kaiako and team analysis of individual and item reports to investigate ākongā skills and knowledge in punctuation and grammar use, and the connection with reading and writing capability. Provide strengths and next steps for teaching and learning for Terms 1 and 2. • Track individual and cohort position and progress over time (T1–T1 yearly) to inform strategic planning for the year.
Term 3	PAT: Pānui (Years 7–10)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kaiako and team analysis of individual and item reports to identify strengths and next steps for teaching and learning for Terms 3 and 4. • Monitor ākongā progress using scale scores and uptake of literacy skills from report analysis.
Term 1 (following year)	PAT: Pānui (Years 7–10) PAT: Punctuation and Grammar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kaiako and team analysis of individual and item reports to investigate ākongā skills and knowledge in punctuation and grammar use, and the connection with students' reading and writing capability. • Track individual and cohort position and progress over time (T1–T1 yearly) to inform strategic planning for the year.