

# PAT assessment considerations

## Diverse learners and English language learners

The focus at NZCER is to ensure equity and accessibility for all learners. The purpose of assessment is to improve teaching and learning for all learners, and the PAT assessment is one piece of reliable evidence of ākonga position and progress.

- Accommodations can be made for diverse learners and English language learners to access the assessments.
- Schools will make their own decisions as to which assessments are appropriate based on their knowledge of their own learners.
- Standardised assessment tools may not be appropriate for some ākonga.

The PAT assessments have been designed for English-medium schools. The following information supports schools to make decisions using standardised testing with diverse learners and English language learners. Having the ability to test a learner at their emerging level of ability allows kaiako to see the skills and understanding of ākonga when they are working independently.

### Selecting appropriate assessments

Kaiako and leaders should use their professional judgement to decide which assessment best suits any particular individual or group to be assessed. Kaiako should review the tests to consider whether unfamiliar cultural contexts, idioms, or assumed background knowledge may disadvantage diverse learners and English language learners.

When selecting an assessment, it is important to consider whether the level of difficulty is appropriate for the ākonga concerned. Assessments that are too easy or too difficult will not provide precise or useful measures. There are both adaptive and static testing options in mathematics and vocabulary.

Online assessment may not suit all ākonga. Neurodiverse learners, or those who are unfamiliar with online devices or online learning situations, may find the online mode of delivery a barrier to responding.

These ākonga may be better served with the paper-based assessment. Ultimately, the mode of assessment should reflect the classroom learning situation and be responsive to the needs of the individual ākonga. Consultation with SENCO/learning support staff may be appropriate when determining conditions. The tests are not appropriate for ākonga at Foundation Level, English Language Learning Progressions.

### Assessment conditions

Consideration needs to be given to providing appropriate conditions for testing:

- Use a quiet space away from classroom noise.
- Undertake testing in small groups or individually.
- Ensure an adult is available for learners' questioning.
- Instructions may be translated into other languages if required.

### Accessibility conditions

Online testing has accessibility functions for:

- dyslexic font
- changing font size and background colours
- continue later—kaiako may choose to give ākonga a break and finish the test later. Timing is still important if you want to use the national reference data.

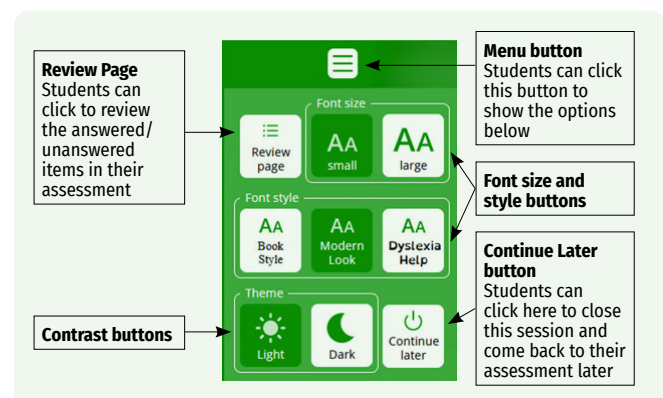


Figure 1: Functions available to aid accessibility (PAT Pānui)

## Timing

The assessments are timed—including administration—and are designed to replicate the standardised assessment trials. The assessment does not include a built-in timer. Kaiako should always use their discretion if additional time is required for some learners. Please note when you alter the time allowance for an individual, it needs to be recorded when comparing ākonga results to the national reference data.

## Reading assessments to ākonga

Conditions vary for each subject assessment. Below are the specific considerations for the three key PAT assessments. Kaiako may apply these conditions to other PATs in NZCER's suite of assessments.

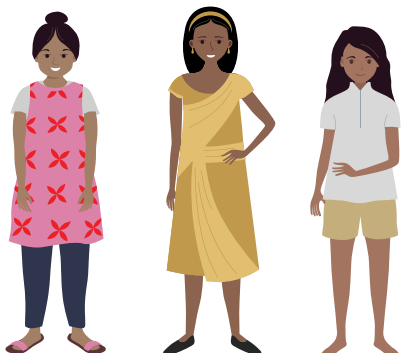
## Specific assessment supports

### PAT Pāngarau | Mathematics

Kaiako are able to read the instructions and questions to ākonga in the mathematics assessment. All online assessments have the text-to-speech option ākonga are welcome to use. Using paper tests, kaiako are welcome to read questions to any ākonga having difficulty. However, avoid explaining what the questions mean. If any ākonga have a great deal of difficulty understanding the instructions or questions, the assessment may not be suitable for them.

#### Strategies kaiako can use

- Text-to-speech is available for both static and adaptive online assessments.
- Kaiako will need to review the tests to ensure the test used is appropriate for the learner's actual maths level, or choose the adaptive test.
- Ākonga may use paper and pencil to support their thinking but no devices.
- Encourage ākonga to use scrap paper for working out, but supports like calculators, rulers, protractors, or other mathematical supports cannot be used.



## PAT Pānui | Reading Comprehension

These assessments provide a measure of how well ākonga can comprehend what they have read, independently, without additional support. Reading the texts and questions to ākonga—or using text-to-speech technology to read it to them—might be useful and appropriate in some situations where the focus of the test is on how well ākonga comprehend separately from decoding, or any fluency difficulties. It is important, however, to realise that assisting ākonga to decode will change how the results should be interpreted. The scores will not necessarily reflect how well they can understand what they have read independently.

Additionally, any national reference comparisons have been developed with ākonga who did not have this assistance. Kaiako should consider this when interpreting and sharing test results with ākonga and whānau. It is also important to realise that how inflection and tone are used when reading a passage could make a difference to ākonga comprehension and how they interpret texts.

Before kaiako decide to use reading comprehension tests with English language learners, they should thoroughly assess how these tests align with the educational objectives for these learners. To ensure beneficial outcomes for diverse learners and English language learners, kaiako need to carefully consider the appropriateness of using the PAT Pānui test.

#### Strategies kaiako can use

- Ensure the test used is appropriate for the learners' actual reading level and differentiate testing if required.
- Ensure the PAT test is an appropriate assessment for English language learners to obtain an accurate picture of the ākonga knowledge and skills.
- Kaiako will need to review the tests and may need to discuss unfamiliar words and ensure ākonga understanding prior to sitting the assessment.
- Kaiako may choose to undertake the PAT: Listening Comprehension assessment using a reader for paper tests or the text-to-speech function in the online test. This may be useful to understand learners' ability to process information when not decoding texts.

## PAT Tuhituhi | Writing—interim guidelines Years 5–10

The PAT Tuhituhi | Writing online assessment is designed to be used in English-medium settings. The autoscoring utilises a New Zealand English dictionary to comprehend what ākonga have written and provide feedback. When deciding whether to use this tool with English language learners, it is important to recognise the limitations of what can be evaluated and scored by the autoscoring system, and how this meets the needs of your ākonga, and your needs as their kaiako. It is possible to supplement the scoring with your own manual marking.

### Strategies kaiako can use

#### Building digital writing experience

- Consider what experience your ākonga have with digital writing (including keyboarding, using spelling and grammar checkers, using cut, copy, and paste tools, using text formatting tools) and how this may impact their engagement in the assessment. Build confidence in these skills by incorporating opportunities for authentic digital writing in your regular writing programme.

#### Building content knowledge and reviewing the task

- When choosing an assessment task, consider what knowledge your students have and need to engage with it. Prior to administering the task, incorporate opportunities for students to build knowledge and understanding, gather information, and read texts related to the content focus of the task (e.g., recycling). The content knowledge of the task (e.g., how much students know about recycling) is not assessed and should not be a barrier to student engagement.
- Consider whether any parts of the writing task or related language needs to be translated into your students' home languages.

#### Discussing the prompt

- Read or translate the task and talk about it with your ākonga. This can involve ākonga brainstorming about the prompt in different groups or as a

whole class. You can make links between learners' lives, the task and images, and to your classroom experiences of writing. The images are illustrative only—encourage ākonga to write to the task. The brainstorm should not be recorded.

- Allow ākonga to ask questions for clarification of the context or any vocabulary used in the prompt.

#### Planning

- Ākonga can choose to plan online or on paper. If ākonga choose to plan on paper, the ākonga or kaiako could write “See my paper plan” directly into the planning box.
- Record planning for individual ākonga as needed.
- Consider gathering paper planning from ākonga to support analysis.

#### Writing, editing, and reviewing

- Encourage ākonga by to look back at their planning throughout their writing time and consider “what’s next” in their writing (e.g., are all of their ideas there, are they organised well, are any key details missing?).
- Encourage ākonga to review and edit their writing as they would during other classroom writing opportunities (e.g., whilst writing, at the end).
- Kaiako can read to ākonga the “Self-Review questions” at the end of testing.

#### Analysis

- Ākonga type directly into a writing field when completing PAT Tuhituhi tasks. Use this information to understand how well your students write in a digital environment (e.g., how much have students planned, written, and edited?).

