

PATs—Mapping results to the Progress Descriptors

APRIL 2026

This resource provides interim mapping tables that support the interpretation of PAT Pānui | Reading Comprehension and PAT Pāngarau | Mathematics results in relation to the Ministry of Education's Progress Descriptors for reporting against the refreshed New Zealand Curriculum.

The tables build on the interim mapping work developed by the Ministry for e-asTTle. This work established expected levels of Proficient performance on e-asTTle tests, which NZCER then aligned to the PAT scales, with other descriptor levels positioned relative to this reference point.

These tables are intended as an interim resource to support schools as they transition to using progress descriptors for reporting. They will be updated later in the year to reflect the curriculum alignment work being undertaken for the new SMART tool.

What are the Progress Descriptors

The Progress Descriptors describe five ordered levels of achievement in relation to curriculum expectations for a student's year level (Emerging, Developing, Consolidating, Proficient, and Exceeding).

The descriptors are one of five common components that the Ministry expects schools to use in reports to parents and whānau. The use of progress descriptors is intended to support clear and consistent reporting.

What do the tables do?

The mapping tables align scale scores on PAT Pānui and Pāngarau with an indicative best-fit progress descriptor for each year level. In doing so, they help teachers interpret what a result on these PAT tests indicates in relation to achievement against the refreshed New Zealand Curriculum, as one source of evidence among others.

How to read the tables

Tables 1 and 2 provide the interim mapping tables. The columns of the tables show the scale score thresholds (boundaries) associated with each level of the progress descriptors for the different year levels.

For example, in Year 4, a scale score of 25.2 or above on PAT Pānui indicates a best-fit progress descriptor of at least *Consolidating*. A score of 32.2 or above indicates at least *Proficient*.

Figures 1 and 2 show the information presented in the tables graphically.

TABLE 1: PAT Pānui | Reading Comprehension scale score thresholds by Progress Descriptor and year level (PATR units)

	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10
Emerging	<14.2	<22.4	<30.9	<39.2	<46.2	<54.1	<60.6
Developing	14.2	22.4	30.9	39.2	46.2	54.1	60.6
Consolidating	25.2	33.4	41.9	50.2	57.2	65.1	71.6
Proficient	32.2	40.4	48.9	57.2	64.2	72.1	78.6
Exceeding	42.2	50.4	58.9	67.2	74.2	82.1	88.6

FIGURE 1: PAT Pānui | Reading Comprehension scale score thresholds by Progress Descriptor and year level (PATR units)

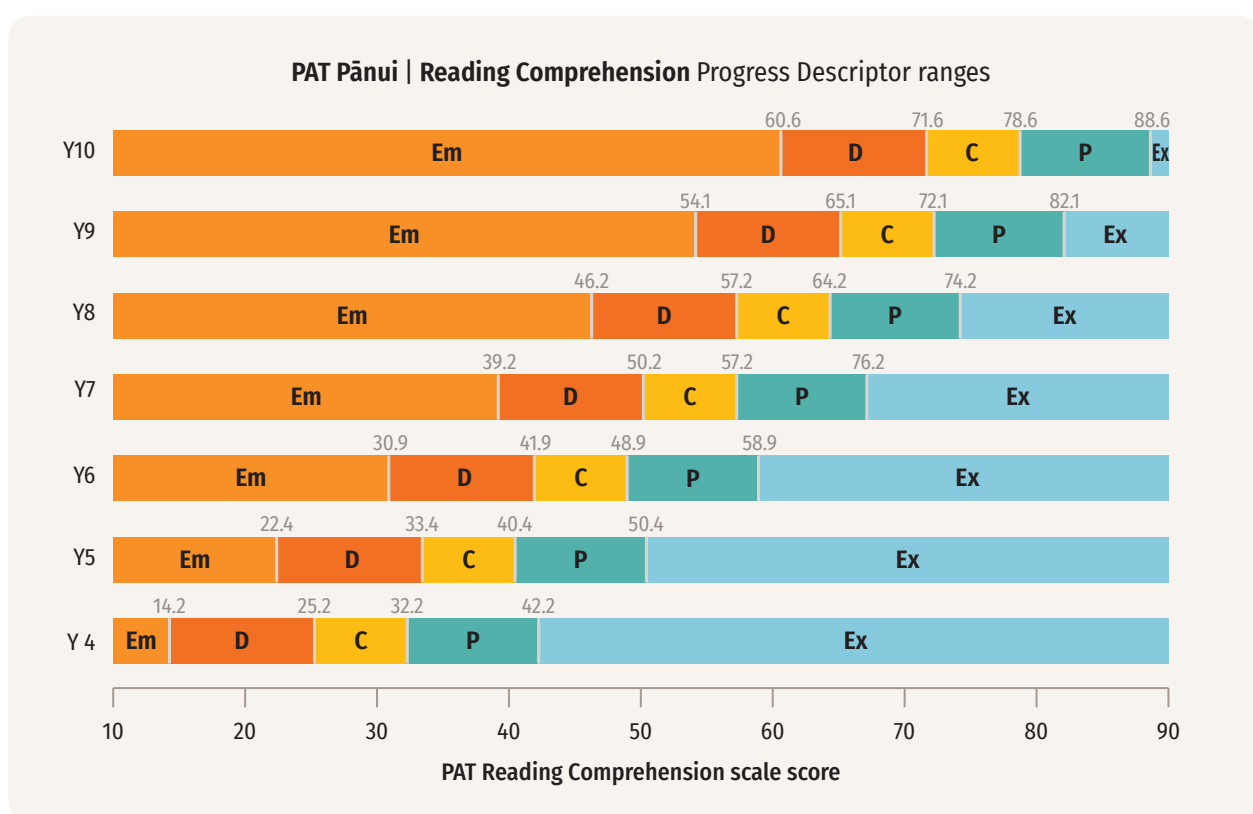
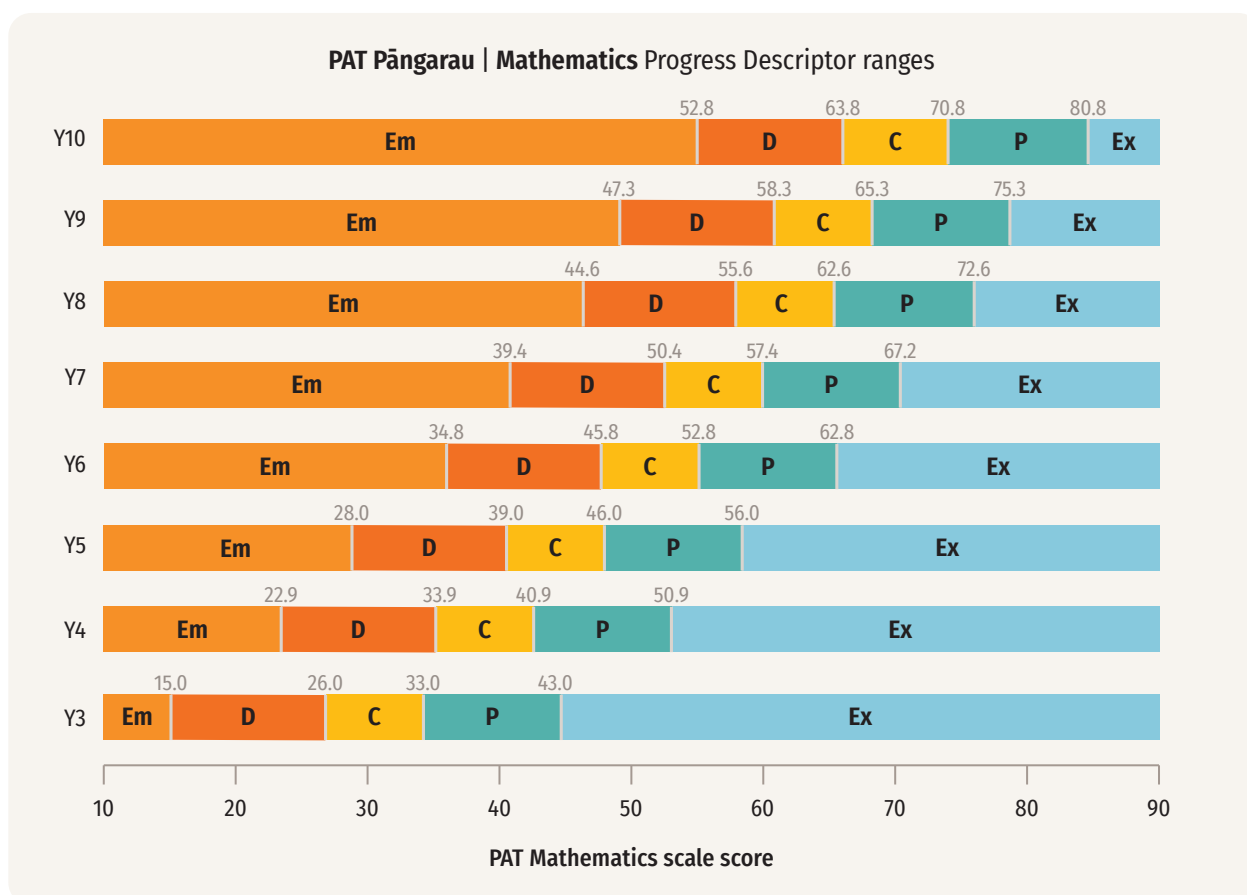


TABLE 2: PAT Pāngarau | Mathematics scale score thresholds by Progress Descriptor and year level (PATM units)

	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10
Emerging	<15.0	<22.9	<28	<34.8	<39.4	<44.6	<47.3	<52.8
Developing	15.0	22.9	28.0	34.8	39.4	44.6	47.3	52.8
Consolidating	26.0	33.9	39.0	45.8	50.4	55.6	58.3	63.8
Proficient	33.0	40.9	46.0	52.8	57.4	62.6	65.3	70.8
Exceeding	43.0	50.9	56.0	62.8	67.4	72.6	75.3	80.8

FIGURE 2: PAT Pāngarau | Mathematics scale score thresholds by Progress Descriptor and year level (PATR units)



Taking measurement error into account

PAT tests report scale scores as a range (for example, 41 ± 3). This range reflects the uncertainty inherent in measuring achievement and indicates how much a student’s score could reasonably vary if they were to take an equivalent test under similar conditions.

When interpreting results against the progress descriptor thresholds, it is important to consider this range. In some cases, the reported range will span a threshold between two descriptor levels. When this occurs, the assessment evidence supports more than one plausible classification.

Reporting a Progress Descriptor

The Ministry's reporting requirements require teachers to decide which descriptor best represents the student's achievement level. These tables do not replace teacher judgement and should not be used as automatic cut scores. It is very important that teachers always consider test results alongside other good quality assessment information (from observations, conversations, tasks, and tools) to support them in making an informed decision. This includes considering the progress that may have occurred since the test was administered.

Teachers may ask themselves: does this result challenge or confirm my understanding of how the student is progressing?

What about PAT Tuhituhi | Writing?

NZCER is currently collating national achievement data for the new PAT Tuhituhi | Writing assessment based on data collected in Term 1. This information will support the development of a mapping between PAT Tuhituhi and the progress descriptors.