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# Assessing English language skills

23 November 2021

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# Overview and learning outcomes

## Overview

1. Reviewing basic types of assessments and basic principles
2. Points to consider when selecting, adapting or designing formative assessments
3. Assessing speaking skills
4. Assessing reading skills

## Learning outcomes

**By the end of this webinar, you will be better able to:**

- describe points to consider when using formative assessments
- describe subskills for speaking and reading skills
- identify appropriate task types for relevant sub skills.

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**What have you learnt from assessing  
your students?**

*e.g. what students can do...*

# Types of assessments

## Summative

A. Usually, **1** exams which are certificated and allow students to progress, e.g. Standard X, Standard XII, degree exams, professional qualifications

## Formative

B. Usually **2** tests which aren't certificated and are used to help students and teachers understand how well the students are **3** e.g. end of term/semester tests, topic tests

## Diagnostic

C. Low stakes tests which aren't certificated and are used to help teachers and students understand the student's **4** before they begin teaching and learning e.g. entry tests, quick-fire quizzes

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# Different types of assessments

## Summative

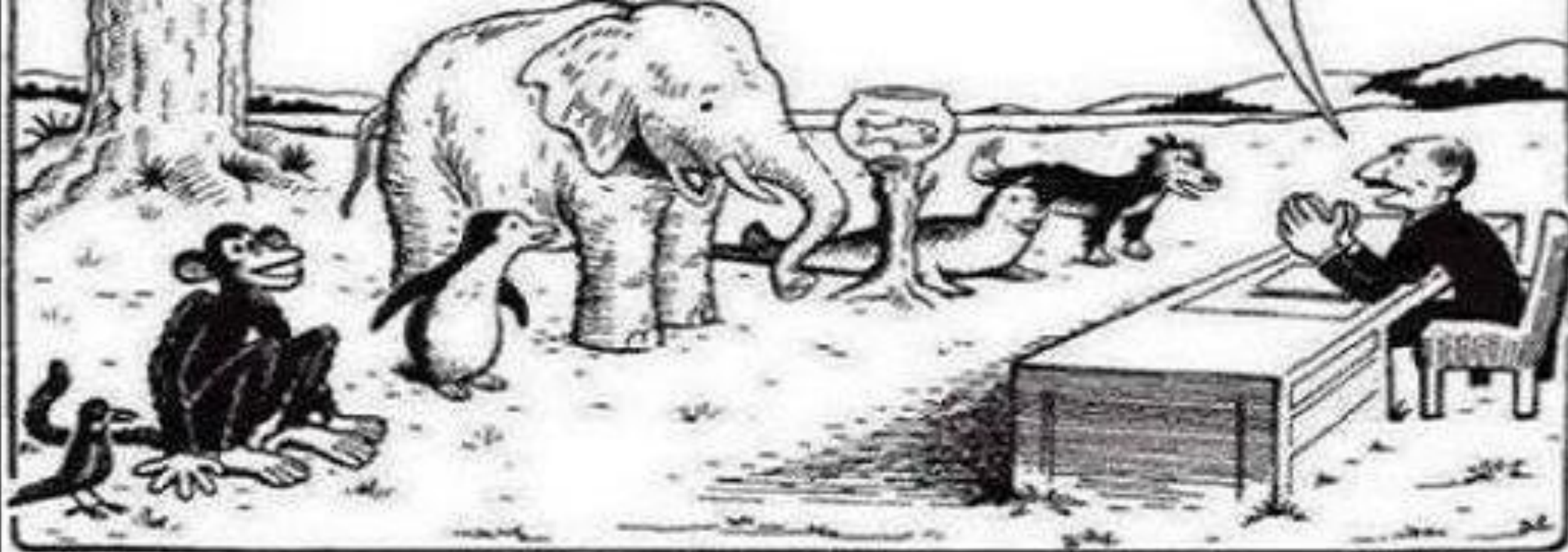
A. Usually, **high stakes** exams which are certificated and allow students to progress, e.g. standard X, standard XII, degree exams, professional qualifications

## Formative

B. Usually, **low stakes** tests which aren't certificated and are used to help students and teachers understand how well the students are **performing**, e.g. end of term/semester tests, topic tests

## Diagnostic

C. Low stakes tests which aren't certificated and are used to help teachers and students understand the student's **strengths and weaknesses** before they begin teaching and learning e.g. entry tests, quick-fire quizzes



# Our Education System

*"Everybody is a genius. But if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life believing that it is stupid."*



**A good test is one that ...**

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# Basic principles

Principle	Definition
<b>1. Purpose</b>	a) The primary reason (s) for which the assessment exists and what the results will be used for
<b>2. Validity</b>	b) How feasible it is for the designed assessment to be administered
<b>3. Reliability</b>	c) How well a test measures what it means to measure
<b>4. Manageability</b>	d) How far the results of an assessment are repeatable



# Basic principle- answers

Principle	Definition
<b>1. Purpose</b>	a) The primary reason (s) for which the assessment exists and what the results will be used for
<b>2. Validity</b>	c) How well a test measures what it means to measure
<b>3. Reliability</b>	d) How far the results of an assessment are repeatable
<b>4. Manageability</b>	b) How feasible it is for the designed assessment to be administered

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Look at these two tests. Read the **purpose** to say which one is more effective and why?

***Write five words related to travel.***

**Purpose:** An assessment to assess how well students can say words related travel.

***Write five words related to travel.***

**Purpose:** An assessment to assess how well students can recollect and write words related travel.

# Questions to consider

## Purpose

Is the **1** **of assessment clear** to you and is it clearly communicated to the students?

## Validity

Does the assessment **2** **to** a specific learning outcome or learning point?

## Reliability

- Does it say **3** what students are required to do?
- Is it a **4** assessment for all students including those with additional needs?

## Manageability

Is it **time** **5** **and manageable**?

a) clearly

b) goal

c) efficient

d) directly relate to

e) fair

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# Answers

## Purpose

Is the **goal of assessment clear** to you and is it clearly communicated to the students?

## Validity

Does the assessment **directly relate to** a specific learning outcome or learning point?

## Reliability

- Does it say **clearly** what students are required to do?
- Is it a **fair** assessment for all students including those with additional needs?

## Manageability

Is it **time efficient and manageable**?

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**Speaking  
subskills**

pronunciation

intelligibility

fluency

communicating a message

language for different purposes

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# Common task types

## Interview

describing something, introducing oneself, presenting opinions/views

## Group discussion

comparing things, debating, discussing prominent issues/problems, finding solutions to problems

## Role play

finding directions, giving advice, giving information

## Oral presentation

telling a story, introducing oneself

# Sample 1



Think about a formative speaking assessment using this picture.

## 1. What subskill can you focus on?

- fluency
- pronunciation
- vocabulary knowledge
- grammar knowledge
- organising a message

## 2. What task type can you use?

NCERT English textbook class 7

[www.britishcouncil.org](http://www.britishcouncil.org)

# Task 2

Work in groups. Come to some agreement on each of the activities given below. Decide which is the most interesting, duller, most dangerous, safest, most rewarding, most exciting.

cooking	fishing	playing football
knitting	dancing	listening to
reading	sewing	music
walking	swimming	mountain
painting	watching TV	climbing
		learning
		languages
		stamp collecting

NCERT Honeysuckle class VI

**Think about a formative speaking assessment using this picture.**

## 1. What subskill can you focus on?

- fluency
- pronunciation
- vocabulary knowledge
- grammar knowledge
- organising a message

## 2. What task type can you use?



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**Reading  
subskills**

summarising main ideas

word recognition/recall

vocabulary knowledge

knowledge of grammar

connecting information

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# Common task types

skimming/scanning

true/false

cloze tests/gap fill

information transfer

summarising

selecting  
appropriate  
headings/titles

# Task 1

I spotted it in a junk shop in Bridport, a roll-top desk. The man said it was early nineteenth century, and oak. I had wanted one, but they were far too expensive. This one was in a bad condition, the roll-top in several pieces, one leg clumsily mended, scorch marks all down one side. It was going for very little money. I thought I could restore it. It would be a risk, a challenge, but I had to have it. I paid the man and brought it back to my workroom at the back of the garage. I began work on it on Christmas Eve.

NCERT English textbook Class 8 Honeydew

**What subskill can you focus on?**  
**What task type can you use for this text?**

- word recognition/recall
- connecting information with the background
- vocabulary knowledge
- summarising
- identifying main points

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## Task 2

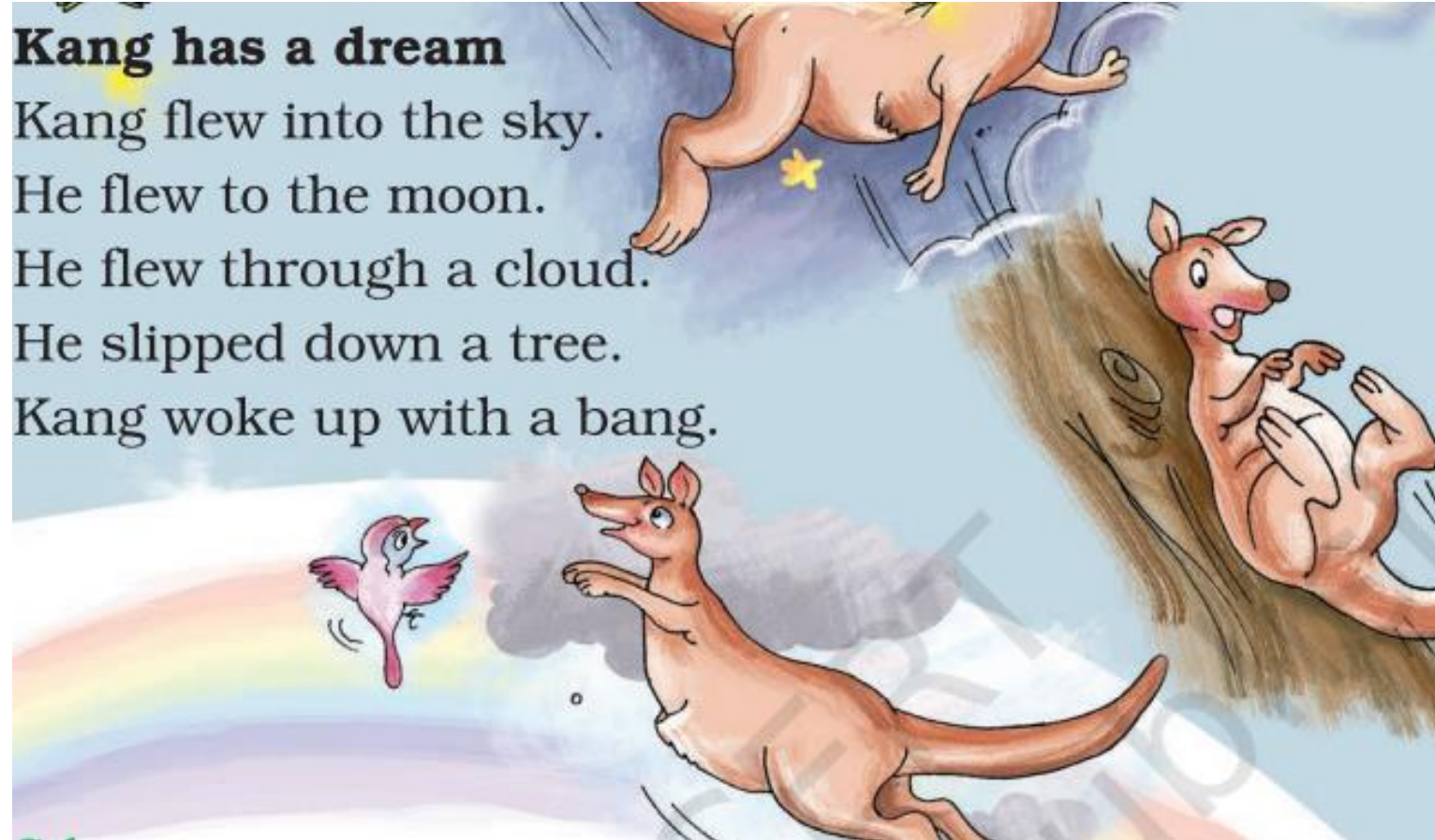
Many students today struggle with time management. Recently, a local school conducted a survey with 50 students. Results showed 40 out of 50 students didn't spend enough time planning their day or the week. This leads to most students getting distracted; not being able to complete tasks on time. However, 10 out of 50 students did plan their day, they made small 'to-do lists' for the day to keep them on track with activities. They also made timetables to guide them through the week or the month. Few students use a planning app to plan their day!

All 50 students said they needed more help with managing time!

**What subskill can you focus on?**

**What task type can you use for this text?**

## Optional Task 3



What task type can you use?

NCERT Marigold class 2

[www.britishcouncil.org](http://www.britishcouncil.org)

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# Your final checklist

1	Write down clearly the objective of the assessment
2	Decide on a suitable format
3	Decide on a marking scheme/key
4	Write clear instructions and/or questions
5	Tell your students about the purpose of the assessment, what is expected and how the it will be assessed.
6	Pilot and revise

Adapted from Richard Frost

<https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/test-writing>

[www.britishcouncil.org](http://www.britishcouncil.org)

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# Reflection

- a. 1 new thing you learnt
- b. 1 thing you will use in your classroom
- c. 1 thing you will find out more about



<https://padlet.com/radhikagholkar/jmeve2vwwwmscb2m>

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# Questions



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# References and sources

## Assessment: The evidence of learning

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/blogs/edutrends-india/assessment-the-evidence-of-learning>

## Assessment for learning

<http://teachersofindia.org/en/article/assessment-learning>

## Reading in a second language, William Grabe

<https://www.cambridge.org/core/books/abs/reading-in-a-second-language/reading-assessment/AF34B40DE9B3B10CE0A205016CD570BB>

## Test writing

<https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/test-writing>

For image: <https://claudettechevrier.wordpress.com/2015/01/06/our-education-system/>

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# Further reading

Supporting language learning through formative assessments

[https://www.open.edu/openlearncreate/pluginfile.php/134914/mod\\_resource/content/4/SE13\\_AIE\\_Final.pdf](https://www.open.edu/openlearncreate/pluginfile.php/134914/mod_resource/content/4/SE13_AIE_Final.pdf)

Formative assessment

<https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/formative-assessment>

Online Formative Assessment and Feedback Practices of ESL Teachers in India, Bangladesh and Nepal: A Multiple Case Study

<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s40299-021-00603-8>

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# Further reading for SEN educators

## Formative assessment for students with disabilities

[Formative\\_Assessment\\_for\\_Students\\_with\\_Disabilities.pdf \(ccsso.org\)](#)

## Adapting assessments for students with special needs

[Adapting Assessments for Students with Special Needs – Home \(allchildrenlearning.org\)](#)

## Equitable learning assessments for students with disabilities

[viewcontent.cgi \(acer.edu.au\)](#)

## Including children with special needs

[SpecialNeeds.pdf \(ncert.nic.in\)](#)

**Thank you**