

End of Primary Benchmark Guidelines

2022

1. The Head of School is the Head of Centre and is fully responsible for the smooth running of the End of Primary Benchmark in his/her school.
2. On specific days prior and during the Benchmark assessments, schools will be receiving the relevant examination papers. Nominated School Leadership Team (SLT) members will receive a link to a **OneDrive folder** which will include the Listening component audio-visual recordings of Maltese and English and the audio-recording of the Mental Mathematics paper. These recordings are to be downloaded and copied on all the laptops that will be used during the assessments. Schools are to ensure beforehand that the necessary apparatus for playing the electronic files is fully functional in every classroom and that teachers are familiar with its operation. If, on the day of the test, the electronic files or the equipment do not function properly, the school may use the transcript that will be provided by the Educational Assessment Unit. If the envelope containing this script is opened, a note should be made to inform the Educational Assessment Unit why this has been opened.

The OneDrive folder will also include the audio-visual recording of the Reading Comprehensions for Maltese and English, for those students requiring a Reader as part of their access arrangements.

A day before the Benchmark language examinations the nominated SLT members will also receive a QR code that is to be passed on to the students who will be granted the Digital Reader for the Writing component. The students will need to swipe the QR code to access the audio recording from their tablet to hear the rubrics and titles of the Maltese and English writing component tasks.

3. The examination papers will be packed in envelopes containing the number of papers needed for each class. An envelope containing additional papers to replace any faulty ones will also be provided to the Head of School. At the end of the session, the scripts must be sorted **according to the Attendance List. All scripts, whether used or not, must be put back in the appropriate envelope and sealed.**

4. Schools will receive the Benchmark material from an authorised person. At the end of each session, school personnel should be available to hand over the envelopes containing the scripts, including any extra papers, to the authorised driver calling for their collection.
5. The Speaking component will be assessed by two trained teachers, preferably the class teachers in case the number of classes is even. If the number of classes is odd, the class teacher will be accompanied by a teacher nominated by the Head of School. Teachers or other personnel who have not attended a training session on the Speaking component in the past two years, are to inform the Educational Assessment Unit.
6. The Benchmark Assessment sessions will take place as follows:

Tuesday 24 May 2022	—	Mathematics Mental Mathematics Written
Wednesday 25 May 2022	—	School Day
Thursday 26 May 2022	—	Maltese Speaking
Friday 27 May 2021	—	Maltese Writing Maltese Listening Comprehension Maltese Reading Comprehension
Monday 30 May 2022	—	English Speaking
Monday 31 May 2021	—	English Writing English Listening Comprehension English Reading Comprehension

The End of Primary Benchmark 2022 assessments will be spread over six days, with some ‘breathing space’ in the exam sessions from one subject to the next. The aim is to make the assessment more student-friendly, giving students more time to prepare themselves better from one subject to the next and thereby help reduce unnecessary anxiety.

7. During the Benchmark sessions teachers are to ensure that students write in **blue** or **black** ink while work can be crossed out in pencil. **Pens with erasable ink, correcting fluid and correcting rolls are not allowed.**
8. Before each Benchmark session, teachers are to instruct students to check their scripts to ensure that they have all the pages and that no pages are unprinted.

9. ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS

- The duration of each component includes **Extra Time**. This implies that Extra Time is being provided to all candidates.
- The class teacher needs to act as a **Prompter** in the classroom being invigilated, if and whenever required.
- For children with writing difficulties due to physical conditions (e.g. a broken arm) the **Amanuensis** needs to be provided by the school.
- **Enlarged prints** and other special examination requirements will be provided as per Letter Circular DLAP 338/2021.
- Hearing-impaired candidates may be assigned a **Communicator** (provided by the Students' Services Section).as per Letter Circular DLAP 338/2021.
- For students with reading difficulties, an electronic reader will be provided for the Reading Comprehension (in both Maltese and English). A file with the audio-visual recording will be provided by the Educational Assessment Unit on OneDrive but the school needs to provide the personnel to operate the equipment and invigilate the students (as per Letter Circular DLAP 338/2021).

It is important to note that for this access arrangement provision:

- The texts will be read twice, electronically at a speed which is slightly slower than normal speed.
- Questions will be read twice and there will be long pauses which will allow students to answer the questions.
- The text will be projected on screen and highlighted as it is read.

- As from the 2022 Benchmark session, students who qualify for the provision of the Electronic Reader in the Reading comprehensions in Maltese and/or English, will also be able to follow a digital audio-recording of the rubrics and titles of the Maltese and/or English Writing papers. The digital recordings will be accessible to the students on the tablets using a QR code. The recording can be heard as many times as necessary by the student using headphones so as not to disturb other students in class. Each task will have a separate recording.
- In the Maltese and English Writing components, a **Scribe** (to transcribe illegible words) may be provided as per Letter Circular DLAP 338/2021. This Scribe, if needed, will have to be provided by the school.

It is important to note that the procedure to be followed when a Scribe is provided is as follows:

- The student must be allowed to complete the task first.
- Then, the Scribe can ask the child to read out all the words which are totally illegible.
- The Scribe writes, in green ink, the word that the child intended to write, using the correct spelling.

- In the case of Mathematics, a **Reader** for the Written session may be provided as per Letter Circular DLAP 338/2021. This Reader, if needed, will have to be provided by the school.
- Reading pens are allowed as long as the student has used it as part of his/her learning process in Year 6. The permitted examination reading pen should not have any in-built dictionary or thesaurus, or data storage facility. The EAU Reading Pens in Examination Policy needs to be adhered to. Check the following link for the policy:
https://curriculum.gov.mt/en/Benchmark/General-Information/Documents/reader_pens_policy.pdf

10. EXEMPTIONS

All students are expected to sit the assessments. However, students who fulfil specific criteria may be exempted from all or parts of the End of Primary Benchmark as per Letter Circular DLAP 338/2021.

Class invigilators are to ensure that students who are exempted or absent from any component should be marked as such on the attendance sheet and the word 'Absent' or 'Exempted' written on the front cover page on both the top and bottom sections, indicating which component/s the student is 'Absent' or 'Exempted' from. The candidate's full name and index number should be written on the top part of the front page. The script should be inserted in the envelope with the other scripts in Index Number order.

11. EXAMINATION SYLLABI

The End of Primary Benchmark will be based on the State Primary Syllabi for Maltese, English and Mathematics. These syllabi may be retrieved from:

<http://curriculum.gov.mt/en/Curriculum/Year-1-to-6/Pages/default.aspx>

and

https://curriculum.gov.mt/en/guidelines/Documents/Primary_Guidelines/MATHEMATICS_primary_guidelines_2021_2022.pdf

In addition, the following guidelines regarding the format of the Benchmark papers are to be noted:

ENGLISH and MALTESE

The language papers will consist of **four** components, as shown in the table below:

Component	Weighting	Duration of Examination
Listening / Smigh	20%	30 minutes
Speaking / Tahdit	20%	10 minutes
Reading / Qari	30%	50 minutes
Writing / Kitba	30%	60 minutes

Listening (20%)

There will be **two** listening tasks:

- The first task will consist of a short text or a small number of short texts of about 300 words such as: *dialogues; conversations; announcements; monologues; instructions; directions; descriptions; and news bulletins, including weather reports.*
- The second task will be about 500 words long and will consist of a: *monologue; dialogue; or conversation.*

Students will be asked to: *write words or numbers in gaps; mark a statement as True or False; underline, circle, or tick the correct answer; match; complete grids with information; and label pictures or simple diagrams.*

Students will listen **twice** to the recordings of both texts, including questions.

Students will be asked to:

1. listen to the text and they may begin to work out the task/s as they listen;
2. listen to the questions and answer as they listen;
3. listen to the text for a second time;
4. listen to the questions for a second time and complete the task/s as they listen.

Students will be allowed some time to check their answers.

Speaking (20%)

In the Speaking Component, in both Maltese and English, there will be eight sets of texts for the first session and two new sets for the second session. This means that when there are more than 16 students in a class, the same task will be used with two pairs of students.

The two pairs should immediately follow one another.

Students will be assessed **in pairs**. Each student will work on **four** speaking tasks.

- The first is *the Warmer / it-Thejjija* which is not assessed.
- The second is *an Interview / l-Intervista* and each student will be asked questions on one topic.
- The third and fourth tasks will consist of two of the following: *Compare and Contrast / Qabbel; Inverted Interview / Staqsini Inti; Single Picture / Stampa Wahda; Picture Story / Stampa Storja; or Thematic Picture / Stampa dwar Tema.*

Reading (30%)

The reading component will comprise two parts:

- The first part will consist of one of the following texts: *a diagram or picture or set of pictures with some text; simple timetables and schedules; short texts such as notices, signs, posters, instructions, directions, advertisements, blurbs, and messages.*

Students will be asked to carry out any of the following tasks: *write words or numbers in gaps, underline, circle, tick, match, complete grids with information, and label pictures or simple diagrams.*

- The second part will consist of a text, fiction or non-fiction, of approximately 500 words. The text will be split up into sections with questions set on each section. Questions will also be set on the whole text.

Students will be asked to answer a range of comprehension questions requiring them to *write words or numbers in gaps; underline, circle, or tick the correct answer; match; mark a statement as True or False, complete a grid; and construct a response.* Knowledge about language may also be assessed. For the constructed response questions, answers need not be in full but they need to show comprehension.

Writing (30%)

There will be a short writing task (10%) and a long writing task (20%). Conventions of spelling, punctuation, and grammar apply in both writing tasks and will be assessed accordingly. The pre-writing task (the plan) will not be assessed for accuracy.

- The short writing task will require students to write between 50 and 60 words on one of the following: *a note / message; an informal email; an invitation; a notice; an advertisement; a short dialogue; instructions; directions; or a short paragraph about a topic.*

Students will choose one of two writing tasks. Both writing tasks will be of the same text type (for example, a short dialogue) but will consist of two content areas (such as, a dialogue about a missed school outing or a dialogue about planning to meet for sport practice).

- The long writing task will require students to write between 140 and 200 words on one of the following: *an informal letter; a write-up of an event; an article; or a short story for the school magazine or a similar publication intended for young students.*

In the case of Maltese, in line with the primary syllabus, the long writing task may also include *a dialogue.*

Students will also choose from two writing tasks both representing the same text type but having a different content area. Students will be asked to plan their writing. The pre-writing task (the plan) is to allow students to use the range of strategies available to them to plan their work. The pre-writing task carries 2 marks out of a total of 20 marks allotted to the long writing task.

More information on the pre-writing task can be found on:

<http://curriculum.gov.mt/en/Benchmark/General-Information/Documents/prewriting.pdf>

MATHEMATICS

The Mathematics Benchmark Assessment is made up of two papers:

- a **Mental paper** which carries 20% of the marks and is 15 minutes long;
- a **Written paper** which carries 80% of the global mark and is 1 hour and 30 minutes long.

At the beginning of the Mental Paper, there is a practice question which is not awarded marks. This is to help students focus on the speaker's voice and familiarise themselves with the test. Additional time is allocated for this question.

In the Written Paper, working space has been introduced in questions that require working. Candidates are encouraged to use this space for their working.

The Mental Paper (20%)

The Mental paper is made up of a practice question and twenty short questions which are read twice, in succession. The questions are graded and divided into three sections. There are some easy questions at the beginning and some harder ones at the end.

The time interval between one question and another for answering each question in each section is as follows:

- the first 5 questions 5 second intervals
- the next 10 questions 10 second intervals
- the remaining 5 questions 20 second intervals

Students will neither be penalised nor awarded extra marks if they jot down notes and do their working on the Mental paper.

The Written Paper (80%)

The written paper covers all the four strands of the mathematics curriculum, that is, Number and Algebra; Measures, Shape and Space; Data Handling and Problem Solving. The paper is made up of 16 questions. The first four questions carry a total of 16 marks and test simple basic skills. The following eight questions carry a total of 40 marks and test the pupils' mathematical competences in the four strands of the syllabus. The last four questions have a total of 24 marks. In questions 15 and 16, two marks per question will be awarded for showing the working, which can include pictorial representations.

Grading happens throughout the paper and most questions require the application of mathematical knowledge and reasoning to solve challenging problems.

12. RETURN OF SCRIPTS

All scripts will be passed on to the respective college Middle Schools in September 2022.

13. **REVIEW OF PERFORMANCE**

The school may request a review of performance if there is evidence of a discrepancy between the student's performance in Year 5 Annual Summative assessment and the performance in the Benchmark, (at least a 25% performance discrepancy). Such request for a review must be received by the Educational Assessment Unit within **five working days** after the school receives the result.

Summary of Changes introduced in the End of Primary Benchmark 2022

- This year the Speaking component for Maltese and English will be taking place.
- The **Listening components** will be administered as **audio-visual clips** rather than audio recordings. Students sitting for these components will be able to hear and see the narrators and actors reading the listening comprehension texts and questions. Pauses will be made between each question allowing students to write their answers to the questions.
- Students who qualify for the provision of the Electronic Reader in the Reading comprehensions in Maltese and/or English, will also be able to follow a **Digital audio-recording** of the **rubrics and titles of the Maltese and/or English Writing** Benchmark papers. These audio-recordings will be accessible on the tablets (One Tablet/Child Scheme).